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The Babe of Bethlehem

CHILDREN'S

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WITH

JESUS,

CONTAINING

A FULL NARRATIVE OF HIS LIFE.

WRITTEN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY

REV. E. J. GOODSPEED, D.D.,

AND

REV. E. W. HICKS, M.A.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK: S. HESS, PUBLISHER

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DEDICATION.

JOHN WESLEY said: "I honor a young man, because he may be doing good when I am dead." To the millions of young people in our land, who wish a Pattern and a Helper in fulfilling life's great end of service, we respectfully dedicate this earnest attempt to set forth, in simple, truthful, and entertaining form, the only perfect life ever lived on earth.

THE AUTHORS.

570092

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

We felt that there was room and a call for a Life of Jesus for Young People, and found in the hands of Rev. E. W. Hicks, A.M., a graduate of the Chicago University and Seminary, a manuscript, on which he had expended much labor. This we purchased, and committed to Rev. E. J. Goodspeed, D.D., of Chicago, a well-known pastor, for thorough revision, and preparation for the press. He has given as much time to the work as feeble health and the care of a large parish would allow; and while he has used Mr. Hicks' manuscript—the fruit of conscientious toil—whenever he could, he has stamped the book with his own individuality.

It will be found to contain a vast amount of information, careful comments, a full narrative of Jesus' life, and much that will be of imperishable value, as well as entertaining to the young people of our country. We have given the amplest illustrations by maps and pictures, in order that the fullest possible advantage may be enjoyed by the reader for a correct and vivid impression and realization of that wonderful life which must forever mould the destinies of our race.

The Publishers.

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The River Jordan

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The Annunciation.

THE LIFE OF JESUS:

FOR

YOUNG PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

A JOURNEY TO HIS NATIVE COUNTRY.

NAPOLEON'S TESTIMONY TO JESUS CHRIST.—BEST FRIEND OF THE YOUNG.—VOYAGE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.—IRON SHIPS.—SIGHTS IN LONDON.—SCENES ALONG THE ROUTE.—APPEARANCE OF JERUSALEM, WITHOUT AND WITHIN.—VISION IN A DREAM OF THE WORLD BEFORE JESUS WAS BORN.—DREADFUL DARKNESS OF THE WORLD.

HEN the Great Napoleon, the conqueror of Europe, was in exile on the island of St. Helena, and not long before his death, he pronounced Jesus greater than himself and before all earthly monarchs. He said that millions would die for the One whose kingdom was built on love. That was high praise, but none too high. Christ is the leader of countless multitudes of persons who love Him, and would rather lose their lives than not to follow Him. He calls the whole world, and promises them salvation if they know and confess His name. He

loved the young and is their best Friend. Everything about this wonderful Person interests us; and if we can tell His story as it deserves to be told, there will be no lack of entertainment in these pages. It is necessary to transfer ourselves to a country wholly new and strange to us, and to enter into acquaintance with people and scenes unlike any we have known before.

Our first attempt shall be to take our young readers to Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine, where the chief interest of our story centres. This city is about six thousand miles east of New York, where we set sail in an ocean steamer for Liverpool, England, or for Alexandria in Egypt. Here is one of these iron ships, which carries more than a thousand persons. Is it not curious that a vessel made of iron can ride the waves? If a piece of iron is laid on the top of the water it instantly sinks. But these vast iron monsters climb the billows and glide through the sea with immense loads of freight and passengers, and never sink unless a hole is made in the bottom by a rock, or an iceberg, or by running against another vessel. The mighty force of the sea is shown by the tossing of these steamships like bubbles on the angry waters. The ocean seems at times to play with them as children throw or kick their toys in glee or in madness. Jesus once spoke to the stormy waters, and they became instantly calm, and the winds ceased to blow. We cannot but wish Him present when the steamer is rising and falling, tumbling and rolling, and all the wild winds are let loose to stir up the sea, and howl through the vessel's rigging. After ten or twelve days at sea, we land, and are soon whirling on to London by rail. Now half our trip is accomplished, and we begin to see new and odd people and things St. Paul's Cathedral is a huge building in honor of Jesus; and

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Flucht nach Egypten.

Spurgeon's Tabernacle holds six thousand people, and is thronged by those who come to hear about the Person whose native land we are now in search of. Hastening on from Great Britain, and through France, we reach the Mediterranean, and sail past Malta, where Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked. to Alexandria in Egypt, the land where Joseph lived and Moses was born. Then by steamer we go to Joppa, now Jaffa, made famous by the history of Jonah, of Dorcas the kind-hearted woman, and of Peter who lived with Simon, a tanner. Jerusalem is thirty-one miles inland, and we leave the sea and Joppa, to ride on horseback the rest of our way. It is pleasanter to travel in this manner than to walk, or to sit in the comfortless old stage. The road near the town is fenced with low walls of mud, and by hedges of the sprawling prickly-pear. Orange-trees line the way, and their leaves are covered with dust. The fields are sowed with millet or planted with watermelons. We traverse the plain of Sharon, famous in Bible history; but as we get away into the country the scenery is wild and barren. Three hours' riding brings us to Lydda, the place where Peter raised from the dead, and restored to his grateful family, Éneas. Two hours more pass, and we are ready to stop for the night at Ramleh. Early in the morning, we rise with hungry appetites for the breakfast of boiled eggs, brown bread, and coffee, which the monks of the convent have prepared at our request, and start again upon our journey. The road lies over rocky hills and along narrow ravines. All is lonely and naked, where in Jesus' time there were populous and cultivated fields. Our eyes are looking forward to catch a glimpse of the Holy City, Jerusalem, when suddenly from a hill-top we see it, and are glad. It is two miles farther; but we dismount, and kneel-

ing upon the ground thank God that we see the City of the Great King, and pray that we may be suitably affected as we visit the hallowed spots where Jesus taught and suffered, and the apostles preached and were imprisoned for the name of Christ. As we come near the high walls which enclose the town, we pass, on the right hand, a clump of palm-trees with their tall, branchless trunks and bushy tops. On the left, goats are browsing among some low shrubs. We do not stop at the coffee-house close by the gate, but ride slowly under the stone arch, and exclaim with satisfaction: "Our feet stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!" But how ruined and ragged it looks. On the left are heaps of rubbish; grass and weeds partly cover the loose stones; the houses have a gray, desolate air; crooked streets wind about, no more than ten feet wide, so that a camel with a load of brush completely blocks the way. No wheeled vehicles, not even a wheelbarrow or a baby-wagon, can pass over the rough pavement of loose stones of various sizes lying on the clay soil. Mount Zion has a ploughed field on its side, and wheat and barley grow and ripen and are reaped within the walls. Filth and poverty abound. Once Jerusalem was scarcely second in splendor and wealth, in numbers and prosperity, to any city in the world. When Jesus looked down upon its beauty and glory from the Mount of Olives, and wept because He saw in His mind its coming destruction by the Romans, there were millions of people within its walls. Now they are numbered by thousands, and its buildings are fallen into ruins, or look faded and old. The present wall is thirty or forty feet high, and about six in width. The gates are shut at night, and soldiers guard them, from fear of the thievish Arabs who prowl around ready to steal, rob, and murder.

Objects which Jesus looked upon, nearly two thousand years ago, have passed away, or been greatly altered. We look in vain for the Temple, once the finest edifice in the world, where the ancient Jews worshipped, and in which many things transpired with which Jesus was closely or personally connected. In order to see the past, we must go back into it and place ourselves among those who lived in other ages and countries. Let us suppose that we rode to a hotel in Jerusalem, found a good bed, and lay down to sleep and dream. In the hours of our slumber we seemed to stand beside Jesus where the devil took Him to show Him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Our eyes strangely widened, and their sight grew longer, till we saw to the furtherest boundaries of the Eastern nations, Persia and India, China and Japan. They were curious people in features, dress, and manners, and worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, and odd images in large buildings. In that direction Abraham was born, and the people seemed to turn their faces toward the west. As we looked to the north we saw nations extending away to the frozen regions, and they appeared rude and savage. They were Scythians, and knew not the true God. The Russians of to-day are a Christian people, and where idols once had their temples, Jesus now is worshipped in churches and chapels. Asia Minor, directly north, looked more civilized, but was heathen, and Rome ruled its people, and gave them their religion. To the south we turned, and glanced over the land of Egypt. The Pyramids lifted their tall heads over the desert, and the Nile gleamed like a long silver band. The glory of Pharaoh's empire had in a measure gone, and Roman generals were now in possession of the country. Many Jews also dwelt there, and were

permitted to enjoy their religion, which was the worship of God according to the Old Testament laws. So that the country was not wholly given to filthy and wicked idolatry. Still farther towards the south stretched Arabia, and there men were fire worshippers. In Ethiopia the dark-skinned men had a religion made up of Jewish and heathen practices, or were but partly civilized; while in the deep recesses of Africa, the inhabitants roamed like wild beasts, and worshipped the devil and bad spirits. Facing the west we saw the sea; and on its shore was Greece with its splendid capital, Athens, where there were thirty thousand idols, and an altar to the "Unknown God." Stretching down into the Mediterranean, like a boot in shape, lay Italy, from whose capital, Rome, went forth armies that conquered Greece and all the countries of Europe. The Germans were then barbarous people, and Cæsar overcame them and made them pay taxes to Rome. The wild men of the north were accustomed to sacrifice human beings, either in lonely places or in public. They sometimes built huge frames, of wicker work, in the shape of a man, and filled them with human beings, prisoners taken in war, and lighted fires under and around these images, and burned the poor creatures as an offering to their gods. In Great Britain the Druids held the people to a cruel religion. We seemed to see a mass of people in Ireland gathered in a circle, intently looking at some object in the centre. There was a pile of large stones; and one flat slab above them all inclined a little, and a man lay on it. He was naked, and a strange priest stood over him with a long knife which he plunged into his heart, till the blood ran down and filled a hollow in the stone below. Then all the people sprang up, and seemed greatly excited, and each one drew near the altar to

touch the blood. It was a gloomy sight, and we turned toward America. There the natives were idolaters, and practised dreadful rites which they had brought from the Old World. Several centuries after Christ, the Spaniards who took Mexico found in one temple thirty thousand skulls of human beings who had been sacrificed. In other parts of the continent there was a milder worship, but all was idolatry, and darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. It was a wonderful thing to get such a view, and to waken and find ourselves in modern Jerusalem. The effect of the dream was so great that we were able to live in ancient Palestine, and see things not as they now are, but as they were when Jesus was born and lived on earth. We must tell you, to the best of our ability, about men and things, places and events, as they were, centuries, yea, two thousand years ago.

CHAPTER II.

THE TEMPLE, THE PRIEST, AND THE ANGEL.

THE TABERNACLE.—SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.—DESCRIPTION OF HEROD'S TEMPLE, DESTROYED BY THE ROMANS.—PRIESTS.—ZACHARIAS AND GABRIEL.—ANGELS.—EFFECT OF GABRIEL'S MESSAGE.—ZACHARIAS DOUBTED AND WAS PUNISHED.

HEN the Jews were fleeing through the wilderness to reach the Land of Promise, they could not stay long in any place, and so could not have a solidly built house of worship. God gave them plans for a Tabernacle, which was made of light materials, chiefly cloth, in which their religious services could be performed. His object in taking them out of heathen Egypt, was to educate the nation to know, love, and serve Him. In order to do this, He showed them how to construct the movable house which they carried with them on their journey. It served a useful purpose, till Solomon, by God's wish, erected in Jerusalem that splendid Temple which cost vast sums of money, attracted universal praise, and fell under the Chaldeans, after it had stood four hundred years. A second one rose on its ruins, and endured storms and wars five hundred years. Then Herod employed eighty thousand men nine years in restoring it, so that when Jesus was born there was nothing so gorgeous and costly in any other part of the world. You see they thought a great deal of their religion, for men do not spend much money on things they care

The Good Samaritan

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nothing about. Years after, Jesus predicted that not one stone of it should be left upon another. The Romans under Titus attacked the city, and totally demolished the Temple, even to its foundations. Not a stone was left unturned, to effect its complete destruction.

In Christ's time, and before His birth, there was a good man, Zacharias, who performed the duties of priest in this Temple. In order to see things as they were, we must look into this building, and learn how it differs from the churches of our country. While the real purpose of it was to lead and help men to love and obey God, the means used to effect it were very unlike those which Christians employ. The Jews were God's people, and were taught to worship Him by means of animal sacrifices. Bulls, cows, heifers, goats, sheep, doves, and many other animals, were slain to express various religious ideas. If a man wished to show that he felt deserving of death because of his sins, he brought a beast to the altar, and had it slaughtered. As the blood flowed out, he acknowledged that so he ought to die; and, at the same time, he expressed confidence that God would forgive his sins and bless him still. The priests were a class of men who performed these services, and many others, for the people at large. There were twenty-four courses of priests, and they served a week in the Temple by turns. Their duties were partly ordered and partly chosen by lot.

Zacharias is early at his post, and we meet him at the gate of the outer enclosure of the Temple, and proceed with him through this, and up the stone steps to the next wall. There, looking backward, we see that the whole enclosure occupies a very large area. The wall about it is half a mile long, and the first space within is the Court of the Gentiles, where foreigners as well as Jews were

admitted. Therein was Solomon's Porch, a covered place with marble floors and columns, and cedar roof. It was splendid; and many learned men here discoursed to their pupils or followers concerning all questions, somewhat after the manner of newspapers or books Passing on through a gate, we leave behind us a low wall that separates the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Women. On this wall were notices warning all foreigners not to pass through under penalty of death. We rise several steps, and enter the Court of the Israelites, where the men prayed and sacrificed. Within this was the Court of the Priests, separated by a low wall from the Court of the Israelites. Here was the brazen altar on which sacrifices were burned. Rising twelve steps, we stand at the Temple itself, before the Veil of Many Colors. The building is one hundred feet long, and wide, and high, and is entered through a porch, in which hung a golden vine with bunches of golden grapes five or six feet long, and the leaves so thin that they rustled in the wind. We pass under the Veil, and are in the Holy Place, which is furnished with the Altar of Incense, the Golden Candlestick, and the Table of Shewbread. Farther we cannot go, for the next room is the Holy of Holies, or Most Holy Place, into which only the High Priest enters, and he once a year. Here was the Ark embellished with the figures of two angels; and the partition between this room and the first was a heavy veil, which was torn from top to bottom on that day when Jesus was crucified. Zacharias stands beneath that roof covered with golden spikes, toward which the incense rises curling, even as the prayers of the people went up to God that morning. People pour in with their offerings and sacrifices, all unconscious that there is a change impending, that awful turnings and overturnings are at

THE ARK AND MERCY-SEAT.

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hand, and that One is soon to be born who is to change all this style of religion, and cause this form of worship to cease from among men. Standing in the midst of all this splendor and beauty, and among these solemn scenes, one dislikes to look forward, and see the whole torn down by soldiers, the golden spikes on the roof wrenched off by the desperate priests who had taken shelter there; the altars spoiled, the Golden Candlestick removed, the porches ruined, the gates demolished, the worshippers slain by thousands, and finally, all that spoke of God forever taken away. This was not done by Jesus; but, because His countrymen hated and killed Him, God permitted it to be done by the Romans, who afterwards received Christ as their King. Many of the Jews did the same.

Zacharias saw not that this was a day of great importance to him. It was not needful that he should know all that was in store for him, his country, his temple, and religion. But it was most fitting that what God was about to do should take place where and when it did—in the most open and prominent place in Jerusalem, and under circumstances of interest and solemnity quite appropriate to the message itself. The people were to have full warning, and nothing was to be done in a corner. Great storms are commonly made known by signs of their coming, which the wise catch and act upon. The sunrise is preceded by many tokens, like all important changes. There was a fearful time at hand in Palestine. Who would see and prepare? The good priest scarcely believed what he heard. Let us see. There, in the midst of his duties, and in God's presence, the angel Gabriel found Zacharias. He knew something of these supernatural beings, because they are mentioned in the Old Testament. He had read of Gabriel, the highest of the heavenly

host, and now the strange and shining messenger of God addressed him. Before we listen to his words let us notice a curious fact, and see what it naturally leads us to expect. Take a microscope and direct it towards a drop of water, and you will see it filled with living creatures. They are too small to be seen by the naked eye, but the microscope makes them appear very large. Some persons dread to drink water after they have seen these horrid objects which make it so lively. But the air itself is often full of animalculæ, so fine that no eye can detect their presence. As you come along the line you can see very tiny bugs or insects, then larger ones, and finally huge beasts. In all these creatures there are different degrees of mind or intelligence. The space is very wide between the knowledge of the pollywog and man's intellect. If we go on above man, we must guess, unless we use the Bible. That will tell us that there are higher orders of beings rising one over the other, till we come to God, who is the Most High. What we might expect to find, the Bible actually brings to our knowledge; and it describes constantly the ministry of angels in connection with great events. Here was something of vast importance, because the chief angel was sent to carry it on. The name Gabriel meant "The power of the strong God," and he said, "I stand in the presence of God." He was very near the Almighty in his office in Heaven, and what he should say ought to be considered very important. Nearly five hundred years before he had appeared to Daniel in Babylon, and foretold the coming of Christ about this time. And now he was sent to complete the steps necessary to the birth of Jesus. This brought him into the temple, the holy place, where Zacharias was burning incense, who was greatly frightened by the brightness,

and strangeness, and suddenness of his coming. The angel spoke kindly, and told him what ought to have been very good news, that he was to have a son born to him, and his name should be John, and he should be the one to prepare the way for the Christ, whom the Jews were looking for as their promised King and Saviour. Zacharias could not believe this, and wanted some sign of its truth. He ought to have been ready to receive the message; and the angel said, that, partly in punishment, and partly in proof of the prediction, Zacharias should be dumb, and not able to speak till all these things were done. It must be a strange feeling to be dumb, and how curiously Zacharias must have acted when he came out before the waiting people who stood in the court, and wondered what detained him so long. He could not pronounce the beautiful benediction: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace." He could only make signs to them, so that they might know his condition and go away. When his week was ended he went home, and wrote what he had seen and heard, on a tablet or wax slate, and caused his wife Elisabeth to wonder as much as the angel had amazed him.

CHAPTER III.

THE ANGEL, THE MAIDEN, AND THE MATRON.

GABRIEL VISITS MARY IN NAZARETH.—THE TOWN DESCRIBED.—HER CHARACTER.—GABRIEL TELLS HER SHE SHALL HAVE A SON.—HER VISIT TO ELISABETH.—MARY'S SONG.—ELISABETH'S SON BORN.—THE SONG OF ZACHARIAS.—MARY RETURNS HOME.

ABRIEL must have been kept busy, for he was soon afterwards sent to Mary, a maiden of Nazareth, with very pleasant news.

This visit, and what followed, made this Nazareth virgin famous. Some of the most elegant churches in the world are built in her memory, many of the greatest people honor her with their prayers and gifts, and her name is sometimes said to be mentioned as often as that of her son Jesus. These acts are in our view extravagant and wrong; but we mention the facts to show that we are now speaking of one, who, from being a humble girl, became so noted. She came from a race that was royal in Israel, the line of David. Her family record in the third chapter of Luke shows this, and also traces her descent from Adam. She was therefore of princely blood, though now poor and hidden away in Nazareth, where she had always lived. Her family town was Bethlehem, the city of David, her illustrious ancestor. We hear nothing of her parents, and she may have been an orphan. Her

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Vale of Nazareth

cousin Elisabeth, the wife of priest Zacharias, lived at Juttah, a long way off.

Nazareth lay among the hills of Galilee, to the north of Jerusalem, about sixty-five miles. It was a lovely spot, the little park or basin that contained the village. Several mountains enclosed it, and there was one pass leading through them to this plain, on the west side of which stood the home of Mary. Climbing to the top of a hill near by, you could see across Palestine, from the mountains to the shining sea. This out-of-the-way place was peopled by persons who were ignorant and rough, because they saw little of the world, and had few advantages for improvement. Yet in this neglected vale grew a flower very fair and sweet.

There are some things to be said about Mary which deserve to be spoken of, that we may know what sort of a person she was. The best thing that can be seen in her character was her love of God. This adorned her like a beautiful garment or a crown of jewels. In her poverty and loneliness this was her comfort and happiness. God loved her and cared for her fortune. "I love them that love Me."

Her mind was also cultivated; as the poems she left plainly show. She was familiar with the Bible, the Old Testament, which was able to make her wise. Books were few then, and not many could read. But Mary made poetry which has been handed down to us, and is worth reading.

She was a woman of nerve and self-reliance. Her journeys by herself, and with her husband, and her conversations and general course of life as a wife and mother, plainly manifest these qualities as prominent.

She had "her own house," and was a practical woman. When the feast at Cana was to be celebrated, where Jesus turned water into wine, Mary had charge.

She was pleasing and amiable, for she was engaged to be married to a young mechanic in the town, by the name of Joseph, who also was of the city of Bethlehem, and was a godly man. She was doubtless lovely, because out of all the women of the world, God chose her to be the mother of His Son Jesus Christ.

Gabriel came to tell her this six months after he had told Zacharias of the birth of John. Five hundred years before, he had stood by Daniel in the proud city of Persia, and informed him of the coming of Christ. And now that the time was ended, he walks the earth again upon God's mission. How he loves to work for his Lord! Nazareth was poor as compared with Babylon, with Jerusalem, or with the heaven from which he had come down. Narrow, dirty streets, poor, miserable houses, sorrowful, sinful people met his eyes. A hard place to live in, thought he. Yet Jesus is to make His home here. Not because He must, but out of love for men, that He might do them good, was his Lord to take up His abode in Nazareth.

There is a well near the place, and some have said that Gabriel there met Mary; but the Bible says he "went in unto her," and seems to make it appear he went into her house to tell his story. As his shadow fell over the threshold she scarcely recognized the angel, who said: "Hail! thou highly favored; the Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women!" This greatly troubled the young maiden, unaccustomed to such salutations. But Gabriel said, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." Quieted

by these gracious words, she stood and heard the wonderful message he brought. She should have a Son, and His name should be Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins. He should be a King, and sit on the throne of His father David. When Gabriel had finished speaking, Mary modestly said: "Be it unto me according to thy word." As she found herself alone, she sat thinking over these sayings, and resolved to visit her cousin Elisabeth at Juttah, for the angel had said to her that she, too, was to have a son.

While preparing to go, and meditating on these strange things, she remembered how Isaiah had predicted, seven hundred years before, by the Spirit of God, the coming of Christ. "For unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." "Can this be the child I am to bear?" was Mary's thought. She saw Jeremiah preaching a severe sermon before a king, and with flashing eye threaten punishment upon him for his sins. Dropping his arm and lowering his voice, he said: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch; and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Is he referring to the son whom God will give me? is Mary's trembling question. She heard Daniel explaining a dream to Babylon's king, and these words were in her mind: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Did not her heart swell with hope as all these things came in upon her memory? Well might she wish to hasten to the house of her friends, and consult them about this curious and glorious matter which Gabriel brought. It was a long

journey for those days, because there were no railways or swift stages, and she must walk, or ride on a mule or camel. The distance was seventy or eighty miles, and she must pass the night on the road. But so full of joy and gladness was she, that no distance seemed long or tedious. Joseph consents, and prepares her to take the journey, and she rides away with happy anticipations, in company with friends going up to the capital. The country was safe, the weather propitious, and at the end of the second day, or perhaps the third, she halts by her cousin's door; and alighting, came into the house, and greeting her with "Hail!" was gladly welcomed by her and the dumb priest, Zacharias. Elisabeth cried out in her joy, "Blessed art thou!" And as they were talking, Mary exclaimed, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." With hearts all aglow with love to their Lord, they talked of His wonderful goodness and mercy and the days passed peacefully along. Mary made a note of what she said at that time, and Luke preserved it in his gospel, in chapter one and verses forty-six to fifty-five. As there given it has not the form of poetry, but in Mary's language it was poetic, and we may so present it to your eyes.

MARY'S SWEET SONG OF PRAISE.

"Magnifies my soul the Lord;
And rejoices my spirit
In God my Saviour,
Because He has looked upon
The humbleness of His servant.
For behold, from now
Shall bless me all generations,

Because the Mighty One
Hath made me great;
And Holy is His name.
His mercy from age to age
Is on those who fear Him.
He made strength with His arm;
Scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has taken down rulers from thrones,
And He has lifted up the humble;
The hungry He has filled with good,
And the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His child Israel
In remembrance of His mercy.
As also He said to our fathers;
To Abraham and to his offspring
Unto the ages of eternity."

If you study it, you will call it a beautiful song, worthy of the occasion. It was called by the old Christians, the Magnificat. In the first ten lines Mary praises God for what He has done for her; in the next eight lines she praises Him for His goodness to others; and in the last five for His mercy towards His people, the Church. Probably in her anxiety to keep everything about Jesus, and treasure it for the future, she wrote down or carefully remembered the language of Elisabeth, and communicated it to the Church, so that God has enabled us to see something of what transpired when Jesus was about to come into the world.

Mary's visit was long, and as she was young and strong, practical and pious, the old people were satisfied to have her stay. While she stayed, perhaps the winter passed, the rainy season of Palestine when all things looked green and smiling, and a son was born to the aged people according to Gabriel's promise. It was a happy event,

and friends and kindred came together to rejoice with the parents and to name the boy. They resolved upon calling him by his father's name; but the mother objected and said that he should be called John. They replied that none of the family had this name. The mother remembered God's word by the angel, and would not consent to any change. It was a name unknown to the Old Testament; and Zacharias was beckoned to. Poor man, he was deaf as well as dumb. But they made him know what was the subject of discussion; and procuring a tablet he wrote with a pencil: "His name is John." Then, strange to relate, his tongue was loosed, he was able to speak, and he astonished every one by bursting forth in the praise of God. All were afraid, for they saw that God was in it; and as the news spread great was the wonder, and many asked "What kind of a child will this be?" They scarcely knew that he was to be the servant of the Messiah, the one to go before Jesus and prepare the way for His coming and work. These things were all very astonishing, and showed that a mighty Being was near at hand.

It was a time of much joyfulness, for all were overflowing with praise, as we have seen and shall see. And onward the praises of angels, shepherds, children, and people flowed in a river that still widens; and through all the endless years of time and eternity, Jesus will excite grateful songs and expressions of thanks on earth and in heaven. But He was not yet born; and we must hear how Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied at the birth of John. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, meant to be taken possession of by God's Spirit, so that he said what God intended him to speak. His thoughts were not his own, but God's.

THE SONG OF ZACHARIAS.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
Because He has visited, and has made
A ransom for His people.
And He has raised up a horn
Of salvation for us, in the house of David His child,
As also He said
Through the mouth of His holy prophets,
From the beginning;
Salvation from our enemies,
And from all those hating us;
To show mercy with our fathers,
And to remember His holy covenant;—
The oath which He swore
To Abraham our father;—
To grant to us; being delivered
From the hand of our enemies;
Without fear to serve Him
In holiness and righteousness before Him,
All the days of our life."

SECOND PART.

"And thou, child, a prophet of the Highest
Shall be called; because
Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord
To make ready His paths;
To give knowledge of salvation to His people
In the forgiveness of their sins,
Through the compassionate mercy of our God;
In whom there has visited us
Dawn from on high,
To shine on those in darkness
And in the shadow of death sitting;
To guide our feet in the way of peace!"

This Benedictus, or Blessing, has energy and spirit, and is occupied with God's praise, and an address to the child foretelling his course and mission in life. He was to prepare the way for Jesus; and for his great work his holy parents carefully trained him.

Mary waited a few days for the Passover, which always took place at Jerusalem, at the first full moon in the spring; and all Jews were obliged by their law to attend. It was in remembrance of that fearful time in Egypt, when the angel of death passed over the Jews' houses, and left their eldest unhurt, while he smote the Egyptians. Meeting there her friends from Nazareth, she returned with them, and was once more at home for the summer, in the hills

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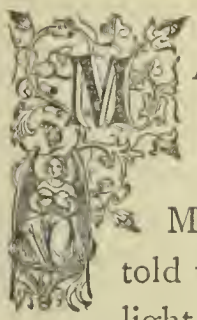
Jairus Daughter Restored to Life.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROMAN EMPEROR AUGUSTUS DECIDES THE BIRTHPLACE OF JESUS.

MARRIAGE OF JOSEPH AND MARY.—PROPHECIES CONCERNING CHRIST.—HOW JESUS CAME TO BE BORN AT BETHLEHEM.—THE EMPEROR'S PROCLAMATION.—THE JOURNEY TO THE PLACE OF REGISTRATION.—FAMOUS SCRIPTURE PLACES DESCRIBED.—AT BETHLEHEM.—JESUS IS BORN IN A MANGER.



ARY went to Nazareth, where she was married to Joseph; and there they expected, probably, to live and die. But God had ordered it otherwise, for the Son of Mary was His Son, and the prophets had long ago foretold when and where this wonderful child should first see the light. God said in Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Moses predicted that a prophet should arise like unto himself, meaning Jesus. "Far off His coming shone," like the rising of the sun. Soon men would see and rejoice in His light and splendor.

He was not to be born in Nazareth, because a prophet had said: "But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me, that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Here Micah said that the promised King of Israel, even the Messiah, or Christ, was to be born in Bethlehem. Such at least was the understanding had of these words spoken

seven hundred years before, by an associate of Isaiah, and God's prophet. He was born and brought up at Mareshah, twenty-five miles from Bethlehem, and is chiefly celebrated for this prophecy. Centuries afterwards Gabriel told Daniel in Babylon, that Messiah should come at a certain time, which was now near at hand. God had thus intimated clearly the place and time of Jesus' birth by these two holy men of old. And long before them, Jacob, the ancient patriarch, had said, when he was about to die:

> "The sceptre will not depart from Judah,
> Nor the ruler's staff from between His feet,
> Until Shiloh come;
> And to Him belongs the obedience of the people."

Judah should be chief among the tribes of Israel, and yield to no other. The other tribes had long ago lost their nationality; and the time was at hand when Judah itself should lose the sceptre, and cease forever to be known as a nation. At this period should come Shiloh, the Peaceful, or Maker of Peace. Rome, mistress of the world, was about to bring this to pass; and Augustus, the Emperor, was to be the instrument of fulfilling these old prophecies concerning the Messiah. By his command Joseph and Mary were to leave their home on the hillside and go up to Bethlehem to be registered. The registering was to precede the taxation of all the people of the Jews. Every one must pay a certain sum of money to the officers of the Roman empire. When this decree was proclaimed in Nazareth, the harvest was past, and people were gathering their figs, olives, and pomegranates, and waiting for the rains so that they might plough the softened earth, and sow the seeds for another crop. One evening a

herald passed along the housetops of Nazareth, summoning all the inhabitants to assemble at the principal gate, and hear a proclamation from the emperor. In the days when there were no newspapers, and few people could read, announcements were made by a public crier. Cyrus, the Persian ruler, "caused a voice to pass throughout all his kingdom." When this herald came into a town his surest and quickest way to make his message heard was to walk over the flat housetops which were connected by walks and bridges. Thus he could send his voice down through the narrow streets and into all the upper rooms where the people lived. Jesus alludes to this custom when He says: "that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." On this occasion the proclamation was so important, that all were required to meet at the gate, where the town business was done, and where persons were accustomed to congregate in public meetings. Joseph was there with the rest of the people, and they heard words read like these: "The inhabitants of Judea and Galilee must go each to his own city, and there register your names and the names of your families, and give such information as may be needful for a just assessment of taxes. And they must proceed without delay to obey this decree." This was a new thing to the Jews, who had hitherto had their own governors, and had not paid taxes to Rome. The census or registration was to take place in their family towns, where their genealogical records were kept. This was to save the government the trouble of sending its agents all over the land, and going to every man's house for his name. The people must come to the officers and report for themselves. As every Jew's name was registered in his native town, it was easy to find out all delinquents, and they were

shut up to the necessity of appearing as commanded. When the actual taxing began, the people rebelled in many places, but they were always crushed by the Roman soldiers, and had to submit to governors, tax-collectors, and Roman laws. Their money was changed, and that of their conquerors substituted for their own currency. The publican or tax-gatherer we know was a hated officer among the Jews, because paying taxes was an unpopular thing. All these events occurred about the time of Shiloh's coming, and turned the feet of Joseph and Mary toward Bethlehem, where their family records were kept.

As they had a long journey before them, their preparations were made with care. Mary rode a donkey, and another carried their luggage, and Joseph walked beside them. They were to travel southward, and when they had climbed over the hills of Nazareth, the plain of Esdraelon lay spread out before them. It was called the Valley of Jezreel and of Megiddo, and was the largest plain in Palestine. In the time of Christ, it was covered with towns and villages. The country was divided up into fields, like gardens with hedges, lanes, and paths, and sprinkled thickly with olive groves, vineyards, and palm-trees. The prickly pears in the roadside hedges were nearly ripe. Here and there were stone walls about vineyards, and towers where men watched to protect the fruits from thieves. Through this rich plain they journeyed to Engannim; and all the way people were gathering their fruits, melons, and vegetables, with shouts and merry laughter. Some were carting away their produce with ox-carts, two-wheeled vehicles; others were ploughing with a wooden plough which had one handle. This the farmer grasped with his left hand, while with a whip in his right hand

he guided the oxen, or beat the donkey. They passed Nain and Shunem on the left, dined by the fountain of Jezreel, near the city, and, when the heat of the day was over, set out again on their journey. In the bushy tops of the palm-trees, boys were picking the dates, and letting them down by a string. Though the trunks were without branches, there were knots on the bark by which the fruit-gatherers climbed them. The road wound round Mount Gilboa, where Saul was killed, and led on to the hills that divide Galilee from Samaria. At the mouth of a ravine was Engannim, where they camped for the night. The early morning found them once more on their way amidst the sweet-scented orchards, where the song-birds carolled gleefully, while the views from the hill-tops were charming to the eye. Dothan was passed, and they came to the Valley of Drowning, which is so called because the water from the hills runs into it in the rainy season and has no outlet. It is three miles across, and smooth as a floor, and bears great crops of wheat. As the hills grew higher and steeper, they were terraced to the top. These terraces were steps on the hillside to hold the earth from washing away, and they were covered with vegetables, vines, and fruit trees, whose green leaves made a beautiful appearance in the morning sunlight. The grapes looked luscious, hanging over the walls. Samaria stood on a hill in the centre of a plain, and was walled, and marble stairways led up to the gates. It seemed like a huge castle frowning on the rich and lovely plain. The country was very hilly and romantic on the way to Shechem. They crossed several valleys, and two or three streams, and entered the Shechem valley between two high bluffs. A large brook ran along the road-side, and just before they came into the city, they crossed it by a

bridge having four or five arches. On the right hand rises over the town Mount Gerizim, the Mount of Blessing. The place seems to nestle in its shadow, as if God's favor was there. On the left hand towers Mount Ebal, the Mount of Cursing. The valley between them is about a quarter of a mile wide. Nearly fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, six tribes of the Israelites stood on Mount Ebal, and six on Mount Gerizim, and ten thousand Levites in concert recited curses against all who should do wickedly, and blessings on all who should do well; and after every blessing and curse six hundred thousand voices of the people in the plain answered, Amen! Nothing grander was ever heard. The little party remembered this event as they journeyed on to Jacob's Well, half a mile beyond, where, in the inn built for travellers, they spent the night. Jacob dug this well in the solid rock, and it is one hundred feet deep and nine wide. They little thought that here their Son would sit weary and thirsty, and that this circumstance would add a deeper interest to the spot already dear to Jewish hearts.

Going on from this place, they entered the productive and sunny plain of Moreh, where cotton, hemp, and millet grew, and all manner of pleasant fruits. They saw men carrying on their shoulders baskets of grapes to the wine-press, a covered place, where three or four men were treading out the wine, steadying themselves by straps fastened to the roof. They toiled hard at this work, and were spattered with the purple juice, the blood of the grape. So their Son was to labor and suffer, being stained with His own blood, as He wrought out alone the salvation of the world.

They leave Shiloh on the left, and Lebonah on the right, where was a delicious spring of water, and an inn. These inns were all

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

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alike, being square stone structures with a flat roof, and a court-yard in the centre open to the sky, with stables for the beasts in the same enclosure. On the mile-post they read, twenty-two miles to Jerusalem, and the road lay among the mountains of Ephraim, and was more and more hilly. They passed Gophna, where the Damascus and Cæsarea roads met, and ran into one track to the great city, and proceeded to Bethel, Jacob's "gate of heaven," the "House of God." When Abraham came into Canaan, he made this his second halting-place. Here was a stone reservoir for water, three hundred feet long, and two hundred wide, fed by two springs, and used as a watering-trough. A hundred asses and camels could drink here at one time.

At Beeroth was another famous watering-place for caravans; and here they got a view of Jerusalem, now eight miles distant. They rode through Ramah, where Samuel the prophet lived, and Nob, the city of the priests.

Jerusalem's magnificent temple gleamed in the sun, for its roof was covered with gilded spikes. The smoke of sacrifice curled like clouds. The walls stood in grand array, with their battlements pierced for arrows, and their tall towers threatening every assailant. All around the city clustered gardens and orchards. The Mount of Olives looked green to the top. Crowds were passing in and out of the Damascus gate, and our company soon found themselves within the Holy City. Leaving by the Joppa gate, they journeyed down the valley toward Bethlehem. On their right rose a steep, rocky height, and on their left the massive walls. About sixty rods from the gate, they came to the lower pool of Gihon, dug out of the rock, and used as a reservoir of water for the city. The road skirted it

for an eighth of a mile. It was forty feet deep, and so wide that half a dozen schooners could float side by side on its bosom. They soon turned down the Kidron valley toward their destination, and entered the plain of Rephaim. Two miles from the city, they stopped to water their beasts from a stone trough at a well, which afterwards was called "The Well of the Wise Men," because they were said to have drank there, when they were searching for the young child Jesus. As they rode up a long hill with Bethlehem in sight, they passed a square, whitewashed stone building, where Jacob was supposed to have buried his wife Rachel. Little did they imagine that it would continue to stand when the glorious Temple had perished, and even after great cities had been buried out of sight. Leaving the Roman post road, which was stone paved, and wide enough for chariots to pass each other, they turned aside into a lane that led to the gate, and were soon at their journey's end, in Bethlehem.

There was no room for them in the inn, because many others were there on the same business which had brought Joseph and Mary: and every place was full of guests. They were compelled to take refuge in the stable. This was not wholly comfortless, and yet it was a rough place for a woman. While they were there, among the beasts, and far from home, Jesus was born. He, of whom the angel had spoken to Mary in Nazareth, had strange companions at His entrance into this world. Wrapping him carefully up in His baby-clothes, Joseph laid Him in a manger, out of which the animals ate their food. A very humble, lowly, and unexpected birthplace for this wonderful child! But God was ordering everything according to His own purposes. The city itself was noted in history; for

there David lived, there Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz; Joab the general, Abishai the soldier, Asahel, Amasa, and Elhanan came from its fruitful hills; and a prophet foretold that He should be born there, whose "bread of life" should be better food for men, than that made of the famous wheat which gave it the name "House of Bread," or Bethlehem. It was not so bad a thing to be born in that spot, though it must have been hard for the mother not to enjoy the comforts of her home. The child knew no difference. He slept as well in the manger as infants do in palaces, or in the softest cradles. These pious parents felt that it was well, because God had so ordered the event.

And now they were about to learn His interest in their new-born child, for men came running in breathless haste to inquire about Him, and to tell strange tales of what they had heard and seen in the fields as they watched their flocks.

CHAPTER V.

THE SHEPHERDS' STORY.

SHEPHERD LIFE.—THE ANGELS' SONG.—THE SHEPHERDS FIND JESUS.—MARY REJOICES OVER THEIR REPORT.—THEY TELL THE STORY TO OTHERS.

IN the vicinity of Bethlehem there were many springs that made the hills and valleys green with grass, even after the dry season had parched and dried up other fields. Sheep like rocky, steep places, where there is also plenty of water; and this region was just suited for grazing at this time of the year, the late autumn. Four men were lying out with their flocks at night to keep them from straying, as there were no fences to confine them, and to protect them from dogs and thieves. According to their custom, one was awake while the others slept; and they had regular hours, which were called watches. The late watch was from six until nine o'clock; the middle watch from nine to twelve; the cock-crowing watch from twelve to three; and the early watch from three to six. By this mode, no one was wronged, and each had an equal amount of labor and rest. The men lay on the ground, with the sheep scattered around them under trees and bushes. The air was not bitterly cold, and yet their cloaks were very comfortable coverings. The last watch had arrived, and the fourth shepherd arose and was told that all had been quiet. But he strolled softly about among the peaceful flocks to be

THE ANGEL APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS.

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sure that all was well, for he was a good man, who was faithful to his trust. It was very dark and still, and a solemn feeling came upon him, and returning to his place he knelt and prayed to the God of his fathers, who had protected David on these hills, and blessed Ruth, the great-grandmother of that shepherd king, and had promised to send the Messiah to save Israel. He was to come from Bethlehem too; and oh! that the day were at hand when He should appear! Then, at that moment, in Bethlehem, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, was lying beside His mother,—a little babe just born. And the shepherds soon received the good tidings. For God, after telling the angels of this great event, sent them to the earth, to these humble shepherds, who were employed in their usual work, to inform them, first of all, of what had happened.

The pious man, with heart uplifted to God beyond the sky, suddenly saw a great light, and he roused his companions. It was in the air above them, and they were alarmed and filled with dread. God was near them, and they were sinful men, who were not fit to stand in His presence, and they lay trembling on the ground as helpless as their poor sheep. Then an angel, all glorious with brightness from heaven, stood before them, and bade them "fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."

This wondrous story they heard, with surprise and gladness, from the angel's burning lips, and it sunk into their hearts and memories. But this was only the leader of a multitude of heavenly be-

ings, who came before to tell them plainly what had happened. The vast company suddenly broke in upon his message, and the sky was filled with their song, as they praised God and said: "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

This was a scene which all the world might have wished to look on; and these were words of great interest to all men forever. It was fitting that such demonstrations should be made, when the Saviour of the world was born. He left heaven and the angels, and they followed Him, to tell men who had come, and prepare them to receive Him as their Lord and Saviour. When the world was created, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. And now that the Creator of the world had come again to live on it for a time, that He might do men, His creatures, good, the beings who served Him in heaven burst forth into a new hymn of praise to God the Saviour. The shepherds heard its language, and remembered the words. Men in the neighborhood heard the music and were soothed by its strains. Watchers by the sick were comforted by the sweet melody of heaven. A dreaming boy saw the pearly doors of God's house open, and singers pouring forth their songs. A mother once heard, in dreams, the angels sing as they passed over her head, and she never forgot the pleasure it gave her.

What a concert was this which the shepherds enjoyed, far more delicious and satisfying than any human music! It was given in honor of the King's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was soon over, and the multitude of joyous singers went back to heaven, and left the men alone in the twilight. When they were confident that nothing more was to be seen or heard in the fields, they resolved to

hasten to go to Bethlehem that they might see the Child for themselves, and make known what had passed before them and what had been told them. They roused the watchman at the city gate, and reasoning on what the angel said, they concluded to go at once to the inn. There they made their way into the court-yard where the manger was, and, finding Joseph, began to relate the incidents of their late experience. There was the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes (the embroidered infant's robe), and lying in a manger. They were very happy to find it as the angel had said; and Mary heard with a mother's pride all these things, and never forgot them. They confirmed what Gabriel had promised; they were just like what an angel had told Joseph; and she knew that her Son was to be some great Personage, though she did not yet fully understand His destiny, or know what He was to become in the world. It was well she did not. It is better for all of us to have our future life hid from our eyes.

The shepherds were men who had duties, and they could not stay long to admire the babe, which looked very much like all new-born children. They repeated their story clearly and often to the people in the inn; and as they went back to their flocks, they narrated the circumstances to many whom they met. Their associate in the field rejoiced greatly when they reported that they had found the boy, and he took the first spare hour to visit the family in their lowly lodgings and see the Child of whom the angel had spoken. In after years, when they had grown old, they heard Him preach, and found rest for their souls in His heavenly words.

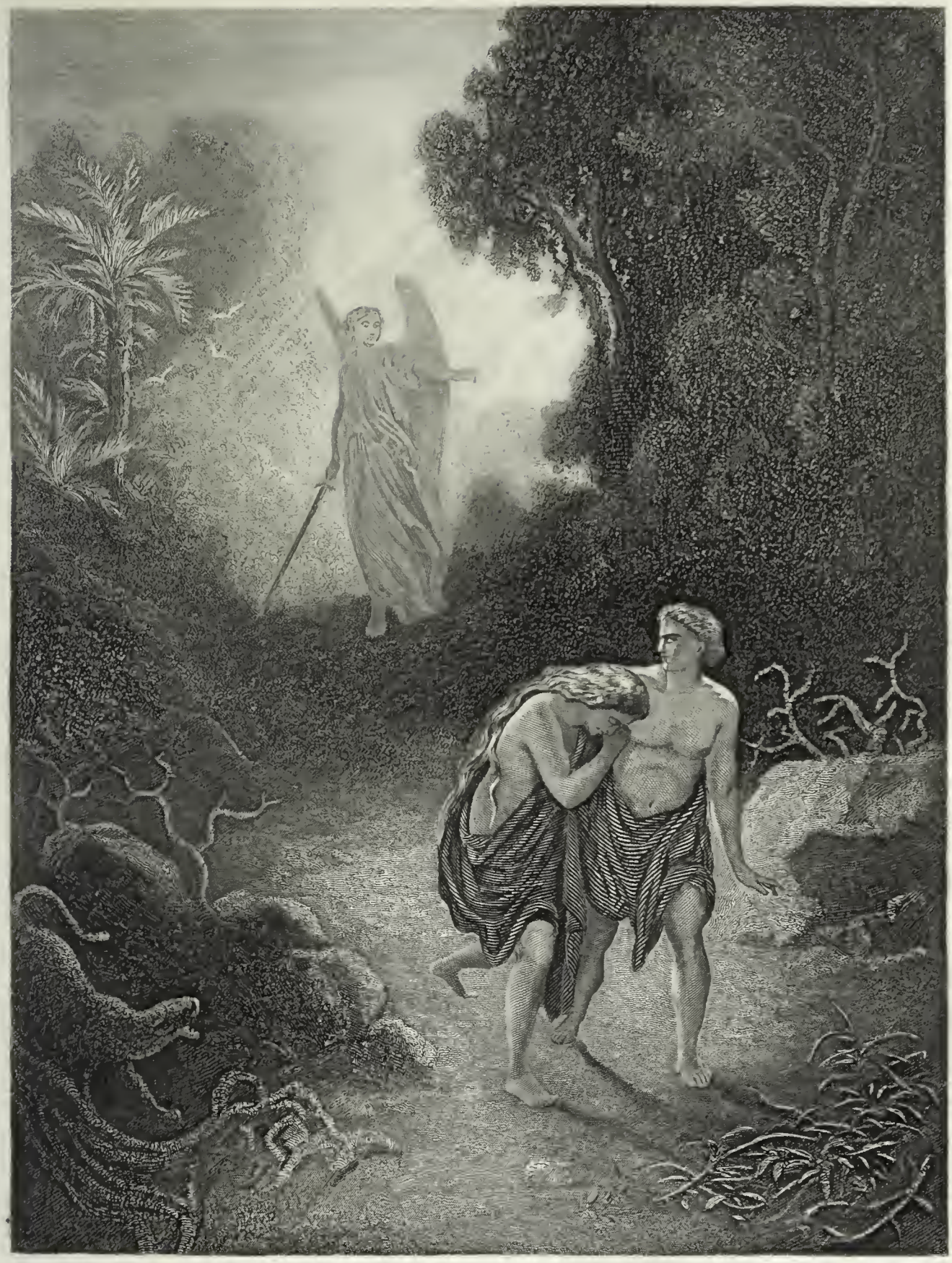
CHAPTER VI.

SIX WEEKS IN BETHLEHEM.

JOSEPH ENROLLS HIS FAMILY.—CIRCUMCISION OF THE BABE.—RIDE TO JERUSALEM.—CEREMONY OF REDEEMING THE CHILD.—SIMEON AND ANNA RECOGNIZE JESUS AS THE CHRIST.—EXCURSION AROUND BETHLEHEM.

OSEPH removed his family to better quarters as soon as possible, because he had several things to do which would require a stay of many days, and a manger was not a worthy cradle for such a child, nor a stable a proper nursery.

The first matter to be attended to, and that for which he made the journey, was the registration. As soon as the mother could walk down the street, he took her and the babe, and went to the office where the enrolment was made. The Emperor Julian long after this time said to the Christians: "This Jesus whom you extol was one of Cæsar's subjects. If you make a doubt of it, I will prove it by and by, though it may as well be done now; for you say yourselves that He was enrolled with His father and mother in the time of Cyrenius." It was a Roman custom which registered women and children as well as men. Joseph conformed to it now, because his country was under Roman rule. The Jews also enrolled the family at the head-quarters of their ancestors. So when these



Adam and Eve Driven out of Eden.

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three were asked their names, the clerk unrolled a parchment, and, looking over the list of names, found in the Hebrew catalogue—"Joseph, the son of Jacob." Then he also took Mary's roll, and found her name. Turning to his own Latin roll, he wrote their names and that of their son Jesus. After he had made the necessary inquiries about their residence, property, and ages, and written out the answers, he let them go. They thus obeyed the law of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar. God also had made laws concerning their child which they carefully kept. One was that He should be circumcised. It was at that time that He received the name which the angel had given Him before His birth: "A name above every name!" No other name has been so widely known or highly honored, as the name

"Before His wondrous birth,
To Christ the Saviour given."

At the end of forty days He was, by God's law, to be presented to the Lord, because He was the first-born son. He was also to be redeemed by the payment of five shekels of silver, worth about two and a half dollars. This commandment was made after the flight of the Jews out of Egypt, and in memory of the passover. When the destroying angel went through the land where the Hebrews were slaves, and killed the first-born in every Egyptian family, he passed over the houses of the Jews, because they had sprinkled blood on their door-posts. And because He spared their children on that dreadful night, God claimed their first-born for His own; but by paying five shekels, they could redeem or buy him back from the priest. It must be done at the end of forty days.

At the appointed time, these pious people made ready to present Jesus in the Temple. The mother is seated on a donkey with the infant on her lap, and Joseph walks by their side, with his staff in one hand, and a basket in the other, containing two doves for a sacrifice, and the five shekels in his purse. The timid, pretty birds were like our mourning doves, and cost a few cents. If he had been able, he should have taken one lamb a year old, and one dove; but the poor might offer two doves instead. Had the Wise Men come before, he would have had means to make a richer offering. God accepts a man according to his ability and intention. The gifts of the poor are as acceptable to Him as those of the wealthy, if made in the right spirit.

The showers had begun to fall in the autumn, and the fall work was nearly over. The ride was full of beautiful views, and Jerusalem rose among the hills like a mountain of snow and gold. When they came to the valley of Hinnom the road parted; and one course was by the left hand up the valley to the Bethlehem gate, and the other down Hinnom and up the Kidron valley to the Temple gate. To avoid the necessity of going through the whole breadth of the crowded city, they took the right-hand road, and traversed the valley of Hinnom. It was there about twenty rods wide, and covered with gardens and vineyards, while a stream flowed over a bed of loose stones in the midst of it. On the right, the rocks rose bare and steep, and were filled with tombs, some of which were open and others fitted with doors, some were plain and others ornamented with carvings and pillars. On the left, rose the city wall from the very edge of the cliff to a dizzy height. At the place where this valley joins Kidron was the "King's Garden," a little smooth field, sloping

gently upwards toward the city, which was watered by a stream from the Pool of Siloam inside the city. It was so shut in that it was a warm spot, and very fruitful. Here was a well, a hundred feet deep, which was often full of water, and was called sometimes the "Well of the Foot," because washermen used to tread the clothes with their feet, in order to make them clean. It was also the Well of Enrogel. Little did they realize, as they passed, on the left, the Field of Blood, that from these rocks the dying cry of Judas would ring out in after years—Judas the betrayer of Jesus, their sweet babe whom they were carrying to the Temple. He felt so badly that he had betrayed innocent blood, and was so wanting in hope, that he hanged himself from a tree that grew on the edge of these cliffs; and the rope breaking let him fall upon the sharp points of the ragged rocks, and tore open his body till his bowels gushed out. All this was hid from them. There was a valley on their right called Tophet, where once stood a horrible idol of brass and iron with arms extended in readiness for offerings. Inside the hollow image was a furnace which heated the idol, so that little children placed in its arms were burned to death. To drown the screams of the sacrificed infants, drums and gongs were beaten, while the children "passed through the fire to Moloch," the false god. Some of Judah's wicked kings brought in this cruel custom, which God at length punished, and caused to cease by the decree of the good King Josiah. This pious monarch destroyed the image, and made the valley where it stood a place for the deposit of filth and offal from the city. To destroy the smell, fires were kept burning there day and night, all the year. It became in this way a figure of hell, where the wicked, who are cast away from God, suffer, "the smoke of whose torment ascendeth up forever and ever."

They went on and came to the Pool of Siloam; and a little farther on they passed the Upper Pool of Siloam, which in later times was called from Mary, "The Fountain of the Virgin." At length they stand where they can see the Temple with its white stones and plates of gold, and their hearts swell with enthusiasm as they enter the Shushan or eastern gate of the House of God. Leaving their donkey in the Court of the Gentiles, they went up the steps, carrying the babe and the basket of doves. When they gave their offering into the hands of the priest, they bowed their heads and worshipped, while one of the birds was killed and laid on the altar-fire and burned, after its blood had been sprinkled on the side of the altar. The blood of the other pigeon was likewise sprinkled on the altar, but its body was kept by the priest for his portion. The blood was shed and the altar stained with it to show that sin deserved death, and could not be forgiven without such a confession by the worshipper. None of them knew at this time that Mary carried in her bosom the One who was to become an offering for the sins of the whole world; and that when He died, all sacrifices of beasts and birds must come to an end. After the offering, the priest washed his hands in a laver, and came to Mary, and repeated a prayer, and pronounced her purified from her sickness. Then he took Jesus and said: "Is this boy yours? Is he your first-born? Then, as the first-born, he belongs to me. If you desire to have him, you must redeem him." Joseph paid the five shekels, saying: "This silver is offered to you for that purpose only." The priest, turning to the people, said: 'This child is mine according to this law,—'Those who are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels.' But I am

content with this in exchange." Then he handed back the child, took the shekels, and concluded the ceremony. They had presented Him to the Lord, and were about to leave the sacred place, when another great surprise fell upon them.

Already angels had astonished them by their messages given to Mary, to Joseph, and to the shepherds; and now God revealed the wonderful character of the Holy Child to two of His people, who were of great age, highly esteemed, and well known as frequenters of the Temple. Simeon was one of these favored ones; and he was just or honest, devout or pious, and waited for the coming of Christ with constant expectation. He looked for the promised Messiah, because God had told him that he should not die until he had seen this Saviour of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. As he was aged, he knew the time must be near.

The other person to whom Jesus was about to be made known was Anna, who also lived in Jerusalem, and was a widow eighty-four years old. She was a prophetess, and knew the Scriptures; so that it was fitting that Christ should be revealed to her. Her constant attendance on the Temple service, and her devotion to fasting and prayers, made her an object of reverence to the people. She and Simeon often communicated to one another their hopes and expectations about the coming of Christ.

As the holy man saw the babe in the arms of Mary, he felt that his prayers were answered, and he told her who and what her child was. She let him take the infant, and he wept and rejoiced over it, saying:

"Now Thou lettest Thy servant depart, Lord,
According to Thy word, in peace;

Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation
Which Thou hast prepared before the face
Of all the people:
A light for the lightening of nations,
And glory of Thy people, Israel."

This was a sweet prayer, even a dying song; because Simeon praised God for letting him die in peace. The parents were wondering at all this, when Simeon told them that they were blessed of God in being permitted to rear the Anointed One, the Christ of God. To the mother he further spoke in words full of sadness to her heart: "Behold this One lies for a falling and a rising up of many in Israel: and for a sign that shall be spoken against. And even thou; a long sword shall pierce through thine own soul; in order that the thoughts from many hearts should be revealed." Her son should be to her the cause of great pain. Did she not think of this, when she saw Him, long afterwards, nailed to the bitter cross? It was not by any fault of His, that she was made to suffer; for He was without sin and blame, and was tenderly loved by her to the last. But the enemies of God and of truth fell on Him, and put Him to torture, and killed Him; and the heart of that fond mother bled for His sufferings, even as Simeon predicted that morning as he held the infant Jesus in his trembling arms.

Just then Anna came hobbling along, and joined in praising God for the child. She began also to tell the people who were of the same spirit with herself, that God had heard their prayers and sent the Saviour to Israel. Her words were believed because she was a prophetess and a holy woman.

After this happened in the Temple, Joseph took his family back

JOSEPH AND MARY GOING TO REDEEM THEIR CHILD.

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to Bethlehem, and while they still tarried there, they made an excursion among the places of interest around this ancient town. They began with David's Well, from which his three mighty men drew water for him, when the Philistines lay encamped all about it. It was proof of their great courage and love for their king, who sighed for a draught of its delicious waters. A short distance beyond, on the hill, was Rachel's tomb with its white dome; and a multitude of graves near it testified to the love and honor in which her memory was held. People often requested to be buried as near her tomb as possible, because she had been Jacob's favorite wife. Thus her influence continued long after she was laid in the rocky cave. They passed through Jesse's fields, and looked upon the spot where Ruth gleaned barley, when the eye of Boaz fell on her beauty. In the valley David killed a lion and a bear, which had come down to steal his father's sheep. They visited the cave of Adullam, in which robbers once hid themselves and their captives and plunder. Herod had now rid the land of these dangerous men; and families of the poorer sort were dwelling quietly in the cave. It was particularly interesting from its having once sheltered David and his soldiers. They explored some of its windings by the aid of torches, but were afraid to go far lest they might lose their way. They next came to the Herodium, a grand castle on a hill, three hundred cubits high, where Herod intended to be buried. They went up the marble steps to the gates, and though the guards would not admit them, they got a wide view of the country. Bethlehem seemed, not five miles off, in the clear atmosphere, but close at hand. They realized the fitness of the prophet's words,—"Set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccarem." That was the ancient name of the

hill, now called the Herodium; and a fire kindled on its top could be seen at a great distance, to warn or to call the people.

The next point of interest was Solomon's gardens, where it was summer almost all the year, and plants and flowers flourished in perfection. The bathing rooms of hewn stone, polished marble, and curious inlaid work, were shown them. The clear running water made the air cool and moist, and they were greatly refreshed, though not permitted to bathe in the marble baths. Solomon's Pools were near, built one over the other on the side of the valley. The lower was six hundred feet long, and fifty deep. They were constructed so that a part of the water, after filling all the pools, flowed one way through the aqueduct to Bethlehem and thence to Jerusalem; and a part flowed the other way down to the gardens. They were allowed to enter the fountain chamber, which was in a garden above the higher pool. Solomon says in his Song: "A garden enclosed is my sister; my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." His words refer to this spring which was hid in the ground, so that no one could find it unless the secret was known The entrance was by a flat stone hung on hinges and covered with earth, which was scraped off before the stone could be raised. Going down by a ladder and through a dark passage, they came into a large room; and the gardener took an iron bar and pried open another secret door, which led into the room where the spring bubbled up in four streams that flowed into a basin, from which the water ran through a large arched way into the upper pool. It was hidden so carefully that no enemy might be able to find it, and fill up the spring, and cut off the water supply from the great city.

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They thus passed a day very pleasantly among the works of God and the labors of man, around the little town where so many great things had taken place in history. And the greatest event of all was the birth of Jesus; and this was now to be honored by another curious circumstance, which was followed by scenes of bloodshed, terror, and grief.

"Lo, Bethlehem's hill-site before me is seen,
With the mountains around, and the valleys between,
There rested the shepherds of Judah, and there
The song of the angels rose sweet on the air.

Oh, here with His flock the sad wanderer came—
These hills He toiled over in grief are the same—
The founts where He drank by the wayside still flow,
And the same airs are blowing which breathed on His brow.

And throned on her hills sits Jerusalem yet,
But with dust on her forehead, and chains on her feet;
For the crown of her pride to the mocker hath gone,
And the holy Shechinah is dark where it shone."

CHAPTER VII.

THE WISE MEN AND THE WICKED KING.

THE ANGEL'S WARNING TO JOSEPH.—THE WISE MEN.—THE STAR.—HEROD.—HE IS MOCKED BY THE WISE MEN.—MASSACRE OF THE BOYS.—GOD'S VENGEANCE.—STORMY TIMES UNDER ARCHELAUS, HEROD'S SON.

THEIR home-journey to Nazareth was delayed and prevented, by the appearance in their town of an angel of God, who ordered them to go in haste to a country far away. And strangely enough, this sudden move was caused by the coming of The Wise Men, with their adoration and gifts, to the house of Mary and Jesus, while they lingered in Bethlehem. These strange men from the East were called Magi, or Magians, because they were thought by their countrymen to have the assistance of the devil in working wonders. They were only more studious and better informed than others; and they especially observed the stars a great deal. God, who controls men's minds when He pleases, caused the coming of a certain star to an unusual place in the sky, and when this was noticed by these watchful Magians, they said this means something. A great event is about to happen, or has already taken place. They had heard that Christ was to be born about this time in the land of the Jews, and that He was to become a glorious King. They resolved to visit the country, and learn more about One so honored by

prophecy and by the God of heaven. Gathering presents of value, and such as were fit to be offered to a royal personage, they made their long journey, of perhaps a thousand or twelve hundred miles, to Jerusalem; and when they arrived they began to make inquiries, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" The reason they gave was this; "for we have seen His Star in the East, and are come to worship Him." They supposed every one would know where so great a Person could be seen. They found no one, however, who knew anything about the matter. Herod was king, and his palace was in the city, but no babe had been born in his house; and the mention of another king filled the city with astonishment. The excitement ran like wildfire till all Jerusalem was in a blaze, and Herod was filled with alarm. He trembled, lest some new man was about to come and drive him from his throne.

Here we may pause, and glance at his history, to learn more particularly about his character. He was the son of a crafty nobleman, Antipater, who had been placed as ruler over the country by Julius Cæsar, forty-seven years before Christ was born. When Herod was only fifteen, his father made him governor of Galilee, because he was brave and able to govern men. He distinguished himself by capturing and driving off the bands of robbers who made Galilee unsafe. When his father was poisoned, he pursued the murderer with an army, and killed him. A savage people attacked him afterwards, and drove him out of the country. When Herod was fleeing, he became so discouraged that he tried to kill himself, but was hindered by the soldiers, who guarded him till he got safely away. The Romans made him king of Palestine, which included his old province, Galilee, and a vast deal more. It is told of him, that when

he pursued the robbers, who had again become numerous, they fled to their hiding-places in caves, which had their openings in the sides of rocky cliffs, so that no one could reach them. Herod made iron chests or cages, and put soldiers in them, and let them down by chains from the tops of the rocks. When the soldiers came opposite the mouths of the caves, they thrust in long poles with hooks, and dragged out the robbers, who fell and were crushed upon the stones below. He then destroyed other enemies; and even his brother-in-law, the High Priest, he drowned in a fish-pond, for fear the people would love him better than they did Herod. His wife's grandfather, Hyrcanus, her aunt, Alexandra, his own uncle, Joseph, his wife, Mariamne, and all who might be heirs to his throne, he put to death, or plotted against with merciless cruelty. He was a man of energy and public spirit, and built many cities in honor of kindred and benefactors, besides restoring the Temple, and making it one of the grandest buildings in the world. His object in making the Temple so magnificent was not to please God, but to strengthen himself in the love of the Jews. He strove to introduce into Jerusalem heathen games and amusements, to tempt the citizens to neglect the law of Moses and forget God. But they hated him the more; and ten men bound themselves by an oath to take his life, as an enemy of God. A spy betrayed them, and they were tortured to death. The people discovered the spy, and tore him limb from limb, and gave his remains to dogs. These were days of blood! His sister Salome so poisoned his mind by accusations against his wife, that she was slain by his orders. His eldest son, Antipater, plotted against his half-brothers, and Herod had them strangled. And Antipater tried to poison his father; but he failed, and yet kept

Herod's confidence; so that he ruled jointly, and when he died, Antipater was to be king. They were ready for anything that promised to keep them in power, and did not shrink from any crime. They were so full of fear, that when Herod heard of the Wise Men, and their object, he at once called together the Sanhedrim, a council or congress of seventy-two members, who were judges of all questions concerning Moses' law. When they were met, he told them that these men had come from a far country, and were undoubtedly seeking for the Being, who was mentioned in the Scriptures. He desired to have them tell him where this Christ was to be born, according to the writings of the prophets, that he might instruct the strangers what course to take to find Him. Herod was not honest in this, but intended to learn where the Young Child was that he might kill Him. Upon examining the Old Testament prophecies, they found that Bethlehem was to be His birthplace. Sending an officer secretly to the Wise Men, he summoned them to his palace in a private manner, and made a great many careful inquiries about the time of the appearing of the star. This was done in order that Herod might learn how old the Babe was, and how he might effectually destroy Him. He informed them about Bethlehem as the probable home of the Child; and requested them to seek Him, and return to Jerusalem with tidings of their visit, that he might also go and worship Him. He wished to send them home with tokens of his favor. The Wise Men did not see into Herod's heart, but God read his inmost purpose, and knew how to defeat his murderous desire, concerning the new-born King, the babe Jesus. They departed in the night on their journey to Bethlehem. They were anxious now to reach the object for which they had made this long

journey; and lo! the star appeared again in the sky, and they shouted and sung for joy. In that country the stars were very brilliant, but this was peculiarly bright, so that they instantly recognized it as their old friend. Doubts and troubles were now about to end, and they gladly followed that guide, till it came and stood over the place where the Young Child lay. They entered the room, prostrated themselves before Jesus, and calling their servants, bade them bring in the gifts which they offered in homage to this Infant. The gold was first opened and given to His father; then the frankincense and the myrrh were presented; and all were quite surprised and delighted. It was all very strange; and when they were about to return to Herod, God appeared to them in a dream, and commanded them not to see Herod, but to return to their own country by another way than that by which they had come. So they left the Holy Family and Bethlehem, and went by way of Hebron on their homeward journey. As they came mysteriously, so they left; and nothing more was ever heard of them in Judea.

They said nothing of their vision from God to the parents of Jesus, but went quietly away, so as not to alarm any one in Bethlehem. Thus they got far on their journey before Herod knew of their going, and could not be brought back. But when he did hear that they had mocked him, by disobeying his orders to bring him word again when they had seen the Young Child, all the rage of his evil heart broke forth. From his talk with the Magians, he learned enough to cause him to suspect that the child might be two years old. From the Bible he knew that Bethlehem was His birthplace. And without trying any other means he sent his soldiers to kill all the boys in that place who were two years old or less. By that

means he expected to rid himself of one who might become a rival for his throne. It was a cruel plan, and one that showed him to be without any fear of God. He was utterly foolish, too, because he could not alter what God had foretold. But when a man is angry, he usually acts like one who has no sense; and even a madman's freaks are not more strange than many of the doings of men who allow themselves to be carried away by passion. Herod the Great was made to seem very small and very vile in this murder of the innocent boys of Bethlehem. The village was only six miles off, and the people were few in number, so that he could easily have managed to find out the probable child, and taken care of him, without massacring a score or more to get rid of one. If he had done this, how changed everything might have been, in the history of Jesus and of the world. An officer sent over to the town on the hill would have learned about the miraculous Babe from everybody; and He could have easily been put to death. As it was, Herod was disappointed. All his blood-thirsty wrath had done was to add another dark stain to his life; for the real object of his fury was safely housed in Egypt.

What a sorrowful day for Bethlehem, when the soldiers thrust their swords into the little bodies of those children! How great and sad a funeral, and what loud and bitter lamentation! There was no way for these poor people to be revenged upon Herod for his crime, or to get any satisfaction. They were under an iron yoke. God only could punish the proud tyrant; and He did send trouble and pain to the wicked man. His son Antipater tried to poison him; and he was caught and sent to prison. Herod would have put him to death, but he feared the Romans. He was struck with terrible

disease, which sent pains and agonies through his body and soul. He became unhappy and imagined everybody was his enemy. Some young men cut down the golden eagle which he had set up over one of the doors of the Temple. This bird was a Roman emblem, and it was hateful to the Jews to see the image on the holy building. The persons who did this, and their advisers, were taken, and burned alive or murdered by the soldiers. Soon the king was discovered trying to take his own life. He was paring an apple and turned the knife against himself. A friend saw and stopped him. Great excitement followed; and the report went out that Herod was dead. His son, in prison, heard the story, and offered the jailer money to let him out. But this man reported it to Herod, who was so enraged that he sent at once and had his son killed.

In Jericho there was a large building called the Hippodrome or Circus; and Herod ordered the great men of the nation to be arrested in every town, and shut up in that place. This was done to gratify an awful purpose in the king's heart. He commanded that upon his death, now near, these men should be all slain by their keepers, in order, as he said, that there might be mourning at his death. If they would not lament for him, they should have something to weep for. But when he died, they were released.

The death of this monster took place five days after he had ordered Antipater his son to be slain. He had a grand funeral, and his body was buried in the Herodium, on the hill near Bethlehem. He was a great man, but by wickedness and cruelty and impiety he made himself a bad man; and while men speak of him with horror, they point with admiration and love to the Saviour whom he tried to kill, by slaying the boys of Bethlehem who were two years old and under.

His son Archelaus took the kingdom at once. It was the time of the Passover, and a vast number of Jews and strangers were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate this Feast. When they heard of Herod's death they made great lamentation for two doctors of the law, whom he had murdered not long before. And the new king tried to quiet the people; who refused to be satisfied, unless the enemies of these doctors of the law were punished. Then he sent troops of soldiers, who surrounded the Temple and slew three thousand worshippers. Their friends fled to the mountains for safety. Fifty days after this, when Archelaus was in Rome, the Jews and Roman soldiers had another terrible battle around the Temple; and when the Jews climbed to the roof of the outer court, the soldiers set fire to the building and many perished in the flames. Robberies and risings among the people were now rife in all the land, and were checked only by the coming of the Roman Governor of Syria with an army, who finished his necessary but bloody work by crucifying two thousand Jews. All these dreadful events happened within two months, or a little more, after Herod died. When Archelaus came back from Rome he again took his father's throne. He, too, was an enemy of Jesus, and we must admire the providence of God, who saved Him from both Herod and Archelaus.

CHAPTER VIII.

A HURRIED JOURNEY TO EGYPT.

JESUS SENT TO EGYPT FOR SAFETY.—DESCRIPTIONS OF FAMOUS OLD TESTAMENT PLACES.—MODES OF TRAVEL.—OVERFLOW OF THE NILE.—THE EGYPTIANS.

HE Wise Men showed their wisdom in obeying God rather than Herod. We know not whether a star led them home; but the Ruler of heaven and earth gave them orders and they followed them, and thus helped to save Jesus from the malice of the king. How should Joseph be warned to flee out of Bethlehem? Perhaps he had heard of the great stir in Jerusalem, and feared something. At all events, in the solemn stillness of the night, he saw the angel of the Lord standing beside his bed, and was told by him of the necessity of hastening away from his present home, and of going out of the country into a foreign land. In Egypt Herod could not touch the dear Child. This good father arose at once at God's command, and told the mother what he had seen and heard. She too was ready to do the Lord's bidding for the safety of her precious Babe. They were not slow in making their preparations to flee out of the shadow of danger. It was needful, although angels were friends of that Holy Child, to use their own hands and feet to preserve His life. God chose this way, rather than any other, for reasons which He

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THE WISE MEN OFFERING GIFTS TO JESUS.

has not given us, but which we know were good and wise. The people were thus showing, in Herod's rage, how cruelly they would afterwards treat their Lord and Saviour. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." But a heathen country would give Him shelter, and thither God sent the parents with their dear child, who was also the Son of God, and our Brother.

Joseph got his mules or donkeys up to the door, and when the scrip was packed with food, and laced up and slung over his shoulder, the gold placed in his bosom, and all things in order, hasty farewells were said, the mother and Child were lifted into the saddle, and the party stole away through the narrow streets and the arched gate, out into the Hebron road toward Gaza. It was dark and cloudy; yet an occasional star shone out like an angel's face, and they went cheerfully forward. Going across the country to Gaza they struck, in due time, the Roman road by which caravans journeyed down to Egypt. Amidst the various sounds that fell on their ears as they travelled, they heard no footsteps of armed men pursuing them, and they cared for nothing else. The watch-dog's bark, the song of the birds, the cry of the early riser they scarcely heard, so anxiously did they listen for the coming of soldiers from Herod. In the morning they breakfasted at Gibeah. They went on to Adullam, an old walled place which was mentioned in Genesis, a book written hundreds of years before. Here the mountainous region ended, and the level country commenced. Seven miles to Mareshah, ten to Eglon, and then they had travelled thirty-one miles. It was a long journey, and they were all weary; but "God giveth His beloved sleep," and they rose early, and were fresh for another day's ride to Gaza by the sea. Over level roads and among green fields

they travelled, and talked about the Philistines and Samson. The heathen dwelt in the walled town of Gaza, and thought themselves secure till Samson one night carried off their gates. These double gates were fastened together by a strong bar on the inside which he could not reach. They were hung in sockets chiselled in stone; and by his great strength he was able to lift them up, and carry them off to the top of a hill near Hebron. Locks and bars seemed of no avail against this hero whom God strengthened. The town was now held by the Romans, who had made it a great place for trade. The fleeing family, from this point, had the protection of a caravan of merchants who were going to Egypt. As the caravan of ancient times carried Joseph, and knew not how great God would make him, so now they were in the company of One greater than the Hebrew captive, and knew Him not. As they travelled the stone pavement, they came to the brook Besor, where David's two hundred, worn out by their double-quick march from Ziklag, halted, unable to go another step. Day after day the fugitives went on, kept by God, till they came to the city of Rhinocalma, on the river of Egypt. Here at last they could rest, and breathe freely, without fear of Herod! In the Jewish synagogue, or church, they offered their thanks and praises to God for His protection, and commended themselves to His care while they lived in exile from their native country. In associating with pious people they found comfort; and they prayed continually that God would open a way for their return to the home in Nazareth. Their Child, for whom they were suffering this banishment, grew in loveliness every day, and they cherished Him as a gift from heaven.

It was a source of curious interest to them to see the annual

overflow of the river Nile, which was called the Torrent of Egypt. Rising away among the mountains of Africa, hundreds of miles from the sea, it was filled by long rains so that the flat lands on its banks were covered with water for ten miles on either side. The swift current brought down vast masses of soft, black mud, which floated over the land and settled down as the waters fell. During the flood, the houses and trees stood in pools of water, and the roads were all out of sight. The people built dams of earth on which they walked from house to house. Right on the top of the water they sowed rice, which sunk down into the ooze, and soon sprang up, making fields look green. This was "casting bread upon the waters" which was "found after many days." As the soil dried they put in every kind of seeds, which grew more rapidly than almost anywhere else in the world. The crops were astonishingly abundant; and the farmers never had to put anything on their ground to enrich it, for the river brought the fertile mud to the right spot year by year. God thus made "the desert to blossom as the rose."

This country was settled by Mizraim, one of Noah's grandsons. Canaan stopped in the country north of Egypt; and Phut went farther along the coast, and made his home near where Tripoli now stands. For hundreds of years the Egyptians were the most strong and wise people in the world. They built the Pyramids, which were tombs of kings. If, instead of these, they had planted schools and churches to educate and improve the young, the nation might have gone on from step to step in prosperity. But the people were ignorant and wicked, and loved war; and at the time when Joseph and Mary took refuge there with Jesus, Roman governors were over the land, and the great kingdom of the Pharaohs faded away.

CHAPTER IX.

HOME AGAIN.

GOD CALLS HIS SON OUT OF EGYPT.—TRAINING IN NAZARETH.—ARCHELAUS BANISHED.—JOSEPH OBEYS THE ROMAN LAWS, AND THE LAW OF THE LORD.

THE exiles were anxious to know what Herod did when he found that Jesus was gone; and they learned with sorrow that the innocent boys of Bethlehem had been slain: but their gratitude was real when they looked on the dear face of their own child, and felt that God had kept Him. They were willing to bear a longer absence from their native country, and suffer more, if they could wholly save Him from the cruel king.

But their stay was destined to be short; for God sent an angel to Joseph by night as he lay upon his bed, who said: "Rise, take the young child and his mother and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life." God in Heaven watched over the Babe of Bethlehem; and the prophecy made by Hosea, seven hundred years before, was now to be fulfilled in its best sense, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." They waited for nothing further, and were soon on their way back to the hills of Palestine. From the heights south of Gaza they first caught sight

of their own land; and they sung a hymn of thanksgiving to God. As they pursued their way along the sea, they saw the ships gayly riding the waves, and snuffed the cool breeze that came off from the blue waters. The country was very lovely, and all were busy with their farms, gardens, vineyards, and orchards.

Upon coming into Judea, they learned that Archelaus was king in his father Herod's place. They were afraid to go back to Bethlehem, lest the new ruler might have the spirit of his father, and murder Jesus. In this extremity God again appeared to them in the person of an angel, and told them to go to Galilee, which was so far north and west of the capital, that they would there be safe. Naturally they would turn their steps toward Nazareth, the quiet, obscure village, from which they had gone forth on their journey to Bethlehem, just before Jesus was born. On their journey they passed through the plain of Sharon, celebrated in Solomon's Song by that comparison, "I am the rose of Sharon," so well adapted to describe the beauty and sweetness of Jesus. It was a long, though interesting journey beside the Great Sea, and under the walls of grand cities; and they were glad when they looked once more on the narrow, dirty streets of little Nazareth, for they were home again!

After so many curious and perilous experiences, they were once more among friends. And they fulfilled the ancient saying: "He shall be called a Nazarene." Their Son was thus to be brought up in a lowly, humble village, according to the purpose of God, who is perfectly wise and good. This had been said of Samson and Samuel, who were truly great men; but neither of them was such a hero or prophet as Jesus of Nazareth. There was nothing here to make Him great and good; all influences rather led Him away from

God and from knowledge. The people were very low, irreligious, ignorant, and vile; so that a boy disposed to be idle and wicked would find encouragement enough on every side. There was no chance for schooling, or improvement in any respect. The times were full of violence, war, bloodshed, and murder. Year after year when the Jews went up to worship at Jerusalem, there were outbreaks and slaughters; and so the people were kept in a perpetual turmoil of anxiety and anger. As the boy grew up, His mother cherished every word and action in her mind. She taught Him the Law of God as soon as He could speak; kept Him close to herself that temptation might not soil or evil hurt Him; led Him out to the well for water, and up to the hills where He could look forth on the beautiful mountains and plains of the land, where so many great deeds had been done: showed Him the grass and flowers and trees and vines, till Joseph took Him into the shop, and instructed Him how to handle tools, and work in wood. There were other children in the family, and Jesus learned how to care for them, that His mother might be relieved of a part of her labors.

When He was ten years of age, Archelaus was banished to a town in France for his barbarous conduct, and a governor was sent to Judea from Rome; and then "the sceptre departed from Judah," for no Jew ever afterwards governed that province. The taxing, begun when Jesus was born, was then completed; though many Jews resisted it, and were put to death as rebels by the Romans. Joseph, as a pious man, was a law-abiding citizen, and he paid his taxes to the Romans, and performed his duties to God. For a quiet, peaceful home, protection in business and hopes of God's everlasting favor, he could do nothing less than obey the laws, and observe the

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rites and ceremonies of his religion. These took him three times a year to Jerusalem; and when Jesus became twelve years old, He too was allowed to make the wished-for journey to the Holy City. For though Nazareth had its synagogue or place of worship, the pious Jew was bound by the rules of his service to pay his vows to God in the Temple, at stated seasons. It was a happy hour for the youthful Jesus when He bade adieu to Nazareth for a time, and turned His face toward the City of God.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOYHOOD AND YOUTH OF JESUS.

JESUS TAKEN TO JERUSALEM, A.D. 8.—THE PASSOVER.—JESUS LOST AND FOUND.—HIS WISDOM AND FAVOR WITH GOD AND MEN.—DEATH OF JOSEPH.—EXCELLENCE OF JESUS AS A YOUNG MAN.

MARY rides on her beast, and the father walks by her side, while the Boy capers about, now running before all, again gathering flowers, and at proper times, minding the beast that carried the baggage. A great company finally pour along the narrow road, singing and rejoicing together. Their religion was a cheerful service, and they all felt friendly and joyous. It was a wise and beautiful custom to commence so early with the children, and accustom them to a youth of piety and devotion to God. Jesus must have been especially delighted with this arrangement, as we judge from what took place later on, in this His first visit to Jerusalem after arriving at years of intelligence.

It is well now to recall the exact date of this Passover—April A.D. 8. How small that number seems to us! The world was four thousand years old, but this was after the Christian era, when a new numbering began. Our common "year of the Lord," Anno Domini, begins about four years and a half after the birth of Christ.

In the spring of the year 8, in the beautiful month of April, the third day of the month, the preparations were all completed, and the party were on their way. The parents of Jesus remembered how different things were, when they travelled this road twelve years before. Then they were going to be registered; it was autumn; and no merry-hearted boy accompanied them. The crowds were not so great then as now, nor was the land as flowery and green. All things seemed to join in swelling their happiness. They entered the city of Jerusalem, and proceeded to their accustomed lodgings on Monday; and Joseph took his lamb to the Temple, where a Levite killed it, and caught the blood in a basin which Joseph brought. Some of this blood was sprinkled by a priest on the side of the altar. The lamb having been prepared was carried home in a basket, and made ready with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. At dark the company sat down to the meal. It was eaten hurriedly, and closed with singing and prayer. On Tuesday there was no labor performed, for the day was holy, and men devoted it to worship at home or in the public place. Early, Wednesday, the first-fruits of the ripe barley were brought into the Temple, and all the people flocked thither to participate in the ceremony of presenting them to God. Then followed five days of freedom to the people, who were only required to attend the morning and evening sacrifices, and to be present as often as convenient at the hours of prayer. On one of these days Jesus made His way into one of the schools where learned doctors were discussing the law. These grave scholars and teachers were greatly surprised and astonished at the questions He asked and the answers He gave. He was a youth of uncommon understanding. There was a sober

earnestness about Him, which made the gray-bearded men listen to what He said, and His arguments and inquiries produced deep astonishment because they were unusual in one so young. While other boys were looking about the city to see new and wonderful things, He was in the company of learned and pious men, seeking knowledge concerning God and the Scriptures.

His father and mother had turned their steps homeward, and left Jesus they knew not where. This shows what confidence they had in His character and judgment; for it would not have been safe to leave many boys of that age in a great city alone; and we are sure they loved Him too well to expose Him to danger. They rode out of the city in the afternoon and encamped near, so that they might return for anything left behind; and when they looked, in the morning, for their Son among the company, behold, He was nowhere to be found, and no tidings of Him could be gleaned from any source. Of course there was alarm and anxiety, and the parents rode back in haste to seek the lost. Where to go they scarcely knew, but a mother's instinct guided her to the Temple, and there among the doctors she found Him. Eager questions were answered by an earnest inquiry on His part, as if He was surprised that they did not yet know that He had a mission from God to fulfil. But He at once arose and went with them. Then they told Him how sorrowful they had been about Him, as they had looked everywhere for their lost darling. He was greatly impressed by their grief, as it was the first time He had ever caused them to weep and be troubled, and He resolved that it should never happen again. And they went home to Nazareth, and He was always thoughtful and obedient, that He might always please and make them happy.

JESUS AND THE DOCTORS.

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For eighteen long years nothing more is known of His sayings and doings except this: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Up to the time of His first Passover, it was enough to say of Him that, "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." The two statements cover all His history from infancy to manhood, except that story of His dispute with the learned men in the Temple, where He was found by His parents after three days of anxious searching. It was one of the wonderful things in His life, which began in mystery and ends at last with marvels and miracles.

He was like other boys and youth in growing; but rather unlike some in being "filled with wisdom." Wisdom is said to be a very important thing by Solomon; and it must have been delightful to have a boy in the family full of it. There was a time when He "increased" in wisdom; and so He became wiser till there was no lack. There is great encouragement in this for all boys to seek wisdom, which means a knowledge of the nature and relations of things. He was strong in spirit and grew stronger; in other words He was intelligent and self-controlled, and became more so as years came upon Him. In tongue and speech He was careful and prudent, so that He had nothing to repent of or regret. Instead of carrying on foolish conversation, or low talk, He was able to converse even with men of learning about matters not generally much cared for by boys. He was evidently a superior Boy in natural gifts and in the use He made of these. Besides a rare and rich mental and bodily nature, He was favored by the special love of God. This was shown more and more, continually, as He apprehended it more fully, and was capable

of manifesting it to others. God was with Him in His prayers, His study of the Scriptures, His meditations, His worship in the sanctuary, His daily life and conflict with temptation. He had peculiar inducements to do wrong, because He was a boy among boys, and a young man in society. But there was so much of God's presence received and used by Him, that He never spoke a bad word, nor carried out an evil suggestion. People wondered at this, and said it was because He had the favor of God, or was beloved by the Lord. They were right; and Jesus afterwards tells the people that God loves Him, and why. The boy is father of the man. A boy whom God is pleased with, grows up under the same heavenly influence, and rises at last into God's immediate presence in the world of light.

Jesus also had friends, and these became more devoted and numerous as His character was better known. He was gentle and helpful to everybody who would allow Him to be so. There were many in Nazareth who hated all goodness in God and man, and Jesus did not push Himself out into this company, because His time for it had not come. Years after His departure, there were men in Nazareth who remembered Him only as a laboring man, who knew nothing of His wisdom, and who were so much offended by His preaching to them about doing wrong, that they seized Him, and tried to throw Him down a rocky place to kill Him. He evidently kept quiet during His youth and early manhood, and was known by only a limited number of people who were of the same mind with Himself about serving God and doing right.

It seems strange that He was silent and obscure so long in a world that needed His teaching and example; but roots lie in the

ground for months before they send up a stalk; and even after the green leaves appear, months more pass away before the fruit is ripe. This is quickly plucked, and the ground again is bare. It was so in the life of Jesus. He was hidden away in Nazareth, in a humble home, among poor people, until He was thirty years old. All this time He grew like other human beings; was a babe, a petted child, a romping boy, an industrious young man, a wise, religious, friendly neighbor, an obedient son, and a favorite of God, whom He was fitting for a public service, that in a few short years would move the whole land, and bless the people of all countries and ages forever. We know all that is necessary to be known about Him; and if an attempt had been made to tell more about His boyhood and youth, it would have been injurious, because men would have forgotten what alone is vital to salvation, His preaching, and His sufferings, death, and resurrection.

A great sorrow came to the family in Nazareth—the death of Joseph, the husband of Mary. He was a good man, obedient to God, and gentle and faithful toward his wife and children. He had so trained his sons that they were able to care for themselves; and Jesus, the eldest, felt the burden resting on Him to provide for those who were left without so good a protector as Joseph had been. It was well for Him that He had been taught a trade, for now he could take up His father Joseph's business and carry it on. His excellent disposition made Him friends among the better sort of people, and the family were well supported by His labor. He learned in Nazareth all the trials and necessities of men in common life, for He was so poor when He left there that He had not where to lay His head, no house He could call His own. He had given His time and earn-

ings to His widowed mother and the fatherless children; and when "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" was heard by Him, He went forth to be baptized by John the Baptist, without much except a good conscience and the blessing of God. He had done His whole duty in the lowly calling, the humble home, the obscure village, the country region; had been a wise and pious boy, a noble, industrious, godly youth, a helpful, faithful Son and Brother; and was thus prepared to go up higher, when the call came to Him from God for a more public and honorable service. In this He is a fine Example for every boy and girl, for every youth, and all human beings, the world over, and in all times. If we do well and cheerfully the thing that lies next us, however small and simple, God will have better work for us and large pay, as we show ourselves true and competent in the lowlier walks and common fields. Jesus was doing all that was required, up to the very day when He appeared for baptism in the river Jordan. He had become well acquainted with the Law of God, and the history of His people, by reading and meditation. But then He was qualified for His after life of teaching by an event which we must hasten to describe.

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CHAPTER XI.

BAPTIZED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST.

POWERFUL PREACHING OF JOHN.—ALL THE PEOPLE MOVED BY IT.—THE JORDAN HALLOWED BY JESUS' BAPTISM.—REASON FOR HIS BAPTISM.—THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDS.—HONORED BY JOHN.—PREPARED FOR HIS LIFE-WORK.

JOHN and Jesus were cousins, and had often met in Jerusalem at the Passovers, and they knew how strangely God had instructed their parents about them. In due time John was preaching in the country places of Palestine, especially beside the river Jordan, where so many wonderful things had happened in the Jewish history. He was a strong, earnest speaker, and told men plainly what evil things they were guilty of, and how God would punish them, unless they gave up their wrong actions and led a better life. He also told them that Christ was coming soon, and urged them to prepare for His appearance. He made a vast stir in all that region, and called multitudes away from the towns and cities, who heard his sermons and saw his baptism, and were persuaded to repent and become followers of righteousness. He was powerful with all classes, whether they were good or bad. Some of the people of Jesus' neighborhood in Galilee heard about John, and went down, a hundred miles or more, and were baptized by him in the swift

waters of the Jordan. At the fitting moment Jesus left His home among the hills, broke up housekeeping forever, and leaving His aged mother with friends, bade adieu to old associations, and set out to offer Himself for baptism, among the throngs who pressed toward the fiery prophet of the wilderness. John is about his work, when Jesus steps down into the water and asks John to baptize Him. The great and holy prophet, who was fearless in his preaching to all who came, and baptized all who gave signs of repentance, stopped and begged to be excused from this service. He knew the perfect goodness of Jesus, not by report and observation only, but by the inward revelation of God, who told him that Jesus was pure. He says, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" What a testimony in favor of this new-comer! But Jesus insisted that it was becoming, or proper in Him with others to fulfil all righteousness, to stand on the right side fully, to be publicly known as favoring the new movement. John then baptized Him. And as Jesus went up from the water to the bank, He was praying, and a miracle took place. The heavens were opened above His head, and out of the glory came a form like a dove that descended and lighted on His head. It was the Holy Spirit, in visible bird-like beauty, who entered into Him there and made Him equal to the new life He was then commencing as a Teacher and Preacher. From the open sky came also a voice,—"This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." By this, John knew that Jesus was indeed the Christ, for God revealed to his mind the sign which should mark and separate Him to the Messiahship. In that glorious moment, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were manifest to the people. God recog-

nized and commended His beloved Son, and the Spirit took entire possession of Him.

All the multitudes who had gone down into the river and been baptized, made confession of sins, and promised to live a better life. But Jesus had not done any wrong to any one, neither God nor man, and had nothing to confess; but as He was about to step forth to a public position, He took this occasion to join the new movement towards righteousness, which John had begun with so great energy and success. And in this first step, heaven opened above His head and poured its richest treasures upon Him. He was well pleasing in God's sight, was acknowledged as His Son, and made the Great Teacher whom all should hear. The Carpenter of Galilee was also filled with a power, and wisdom, and grace which made Him the Prince of Life, and the Saviour of the world. John the Baptist gave Him the highest honor by saying that he was not worthy to untie His shoes, by calling Him the Lamb of God, and by pointing Him out as the One whom God sent him to proclaim and prepare for. He continued his preaching all the same until the cruel hand of Herod was laid on him, and he was put to death, as we shall afterwards relate in this history.

Jesus had been tossed about but little up to this time, had lived quietly at home among the usual employments of boys and young men, and had attracted only occasional notice from the great world outside. At the age of about thirty years, He suddenly leaps forth like the sun of a new morning, and rejoices in the battle of life like a brave soldier.

CHAPTER XII.

TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL.

In a Solitary Place Jesus meets the Devil.—He defeats him in Three Assaults.—The Conqueror's Feast.—Angels again.

JESUS, as the Saviour and Teacher of us all, was now led by God's Spirit into a lonely and desolate mountain region, north-west of the place where John was baptizing. It was a spot fit for wild beasts and robbers, and for the trial of Jesus' character. There, separated from all human beings, He was left alone with the devil, who tempted Him in all points. He tried to make Him think wrong thoughts, and to feel as He ought not to feel. Jesus was all alone, and without food forty days. How much He suffered in that time from hunger and from the devil's temptations we have no means of knowing. At the end of these secret battles, the devil makes an attack, or three attacks, which we must now describe. We seem to see the blessed Lord standing pale and thin at the mouth of a cave, where He had slept without pillow or covering, when Satan appears like an angel of light and speaks to the hungry Sufferer. He points to the stones that lie all about, and says: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." He takes Him at a point where He may naturally be supposed to be weak, after

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

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six weeks' fasting. Just as a general, who has been cannonading a fort and thinks he has made a breach, assaults at this spot, so Satan strikes and hopes to overcome the hungry and enfeebled Jesus. He was impudent and ugly in daring to say "If Thou be;" as if he doubted, and would make Him distrust His calling and character. The vile tempter would have Him satisfy His own wants by working a miracle at his suggestion. He would end His sufferings in a moment if He was really the Great Being He professed Himself to be. Jesus looked him calmly in the eye, and answered in language that showed how much He trusted in God, and how firmly He was fixed in His purpose to obey God's will at any cost. "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." This was much the same spirit which He manifested when He said again to His disciples, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

The devil, beaten at this point, now takes Him to the Temple in Jerusalem, and sets Him on a pinnacle or lofty height looking down six hundred feet into the valley, and bids Him jump down, trusting in a promise that God would give His angels charge over His Son to bear Him up from dashing His foot against a stone. The devil knew something of Scripture, and thought to induce Jesus to make a show of His power before all the people and priests, who would thus be led to admire and praise Him. Jesus met this temptation with the same great principle of duty to God. His answer grew out of His feeling that He had no right to expect God to help Him in an act that was prompted by the devil, merely to excite admiration and praise. He simply said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Foiled here, Satan takes Him away to the top of a very high mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world at a glance, and tells Him that He has only to fall down and worship him in order to have them. He falsely says that he has them all at his command, and can give them to any one he pleases. It was a glorious vision which spread out before the eye of this Carpenter of Galilee. But He was more than man, and the Spirit of God was upon Him, so that He rejects the proposal, and still shows Himself true to His Father and His work. He now is deeply hurt, and says, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." He was not to be turned from His steadfast loyalty to God, by the whole world and all its glory. Then, like a general who has tried in vain to capture a fortress by bribery and by assault, and has been unsuccessful at all points, the wicked enemy of God and of man leaves Him to the rewards of victory.

What do we now see and hear on that lonely mountain? Angels from heaven coming with supplies of food for the Saviour, whose fast was now ended! God had witnessed that awful conflict, and when it ended, He cheered the heart of Jesus with angelic attendants and refreshments. It was a beautiful token of His love and care, and repaid all the sufferings undergone by Him "Who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It was a conqueror's feast, for the fight was real and bore great results. Jesus could not be tempted to cast off His faith in God, or to do anything for His own sake. He was God's Son, and He would listen to no voice that suggested rebellion. He had a work to do for men, and Satan could not lead Him into any course that made Him less or other than the Saviour of the lost.

Adam and Eve fell from God by doubting and distrusting Him, when they were tempted by the devil. They were in a garden, surrounded by fruits and flowers, and everything fair and good. Jesus, in a desert, on the dizzy Temple wall, and on a lonely mountain where He was perishing with hunger, conquered Satan, and was true to God.

The angels never ministered to One more worthy, or on an occasion more honorable, and they sung their noblest songs as they escorted Him down from the place of His victory.

He now steps forth into the world to carry out the wishes of His Father, goes about doing good, and, though He is not wholly free from Satan's annoyances, He also enjoys the sympathy and ministry of angels till He ascends once and forever to His Father's throne.

CHAPTER XIII.

JESUS GAINS HONORS AND DISCIPLES.

He is called the Lamb of God.—First Believers.—Called the Son of God.—Turns Water into Wine at Cana.—He does not sanction Drunkenness, but honors the Family.—His Religion is joyous.—Points and leads to Heaven.

JOHN THE BAPTIST was preaching against sin in all its forms while his cousin was in the wilderness. News of his influence over men spread far and wide, and reached the leaders at Jerusalem, who sent persons to inquire of him, whether he was Christ, or the prophet foretold by Moses, or Elijah risen from the dead. He told them he was but the Voice of one crying in the wilderness before a greater man than he himself was. He informed them that that Person was standing among them, while he was wholly inferior to Him. Jesus had now returned, and was mingling with the crowds who listened to John's preaching, and was pointed out and honored by this great prophet as "the Lamb of God."

There were men in the audience to whom this meant a great deal, and they were disposed to go and find this Being and become better acquainted with Him. They had come from Bethsaida, a fishing town on the north shore of the Lake of Galilee, and were baptized by John, who now points out to them the Lamb of God, Jesus of Naza-

reth. They were four in number, and their names were James and John, sons of Zebedee and Salome, and Simon and Andrew, sons of Jonas. They were partners in business, and earnest Jews in their religion. When Nathanael, of Cana, came down to visit Philip, a neighbor of these young men, it was proposed that they all go and hear John preach. When Jesus left the place of His temptation, they were still attending John's ministry, all except James, who had returnéd home. They were rewarded for their waiting by seeing Jesus and receiving from Him an invitation to visit Him. John and Andrew were first called; Andrew found Simon and brought him to the Lord, who gave him a new name, Cephas, or Peter; the next day Jesus found Philip, and Philip his friend Nathanael; and these five were His disciples. They believed John's saying, were persuaded by His own teaching, and convinced by His miraculous knowledge. For, though Nathanael, called Bartholomew among the disciples, doubted whether any good thing could come from Nazareth, when Jesus told him that He had already seen him under the fig-tree, probably when he was praying under its heavy shade concealed from human eyes, this good man instantly perceived that Jesus was the Son of God. His ready faith accepted the Lord, who also promised that he should see heaven open and the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. It was a happy group as they set out for their northern home where the mother of Jesus lived. Many blessed words were spoken as they journeyed, and on the third day they were at Cana, in Galilee. He meets His mother here at a wedding to which He and His disciples were invited. It was a happy meeting for them after a long separation.

The village of Cana was eight miles north of Nazareth, beside a

plain. This wedding had been some time in prospect, and a large company were gathered at the house of the bridegroom, where the wedding-feast was made. The marriage had taken place at the house of the bride's father, and then the married couple met their friends in their own home. They were people of some means, and had servants and wine. Mary, the mother of Jesus, had anxiety about the supply of the guests, whose numbers were unexpectedly increased by the coming of her Son and His disciples. The governor of the feast, a guest called to take charge of the tables, and to act as master of ceremonies, saw them all arranged upon their couches, or lounges, where they reclined on the left side and elbow. They were eating and drinking merrily, when Mary learned that the wine had failed, while as yet all were not satisfied. It was a very strange circumstance, but perhaps to be accounted for by the sudden coming of Jesus with His company. More likely, however, God designed the event to give Jesus an opportunity to show His power and kindness at a marriage supper, by which He would always be remembered and cherished. John the Baptist was a stern preacher, and reproved people for their sins, and did not mingle with them in their pleasures. Jesus, the blessed Saviour, began His public life at a household gathering, in a joyous company, and endeared Himself to men thereby. He also sanctioned and honored the family and marriage by doing His first great work at a wedding-feast. Wine was as common as milk in those hot countries, and the people looked on its moderate use with favor; nor did Jesus see fit to rebuke, but rather encouraged it. For His mother informed Him that they had no more wine; and though He answered with words that seem half reproving, Mary bade the servants do whatever He told

Jesus Walking on the Sea.

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them to do; and He gave them orders, at the proper time, when His hour had come, to fill up to the brim, with water, the six great stone troughs, or casks used for water, and holding twenty gallons apiece. There were one hundred and twenty gallons, about two barrels of water. Jesus ordered them to dip in their vessels and bear the water, made wine, to the governor of the feast, by whom it was served to the guests. The servants knew where it came from, but he did not, and so he went to the bridegroom and complimented him on giving them the best wine at the last. This was quite unusual, and even contrary to custom, and created remark, and drew attention to the wonderful miracle wrought by Jesus. Wine is produced by long and careful processes, from the culture of the vine, to the decanting into bottles; and here, in an instant, water becomes the best wine. Milton said beautifully, as wine is red:

"The conscious water saw its God, and blushed."

No wonder the disciples believed on Him. They had begun to learn of Him their duties and the way of life; and now they saw that God was with and in Him indeed, because none but the Almighty could cause water instantaneously to become the best of wine. He was so gentle, too, and kind, that their hearts were drawn out toward Him in love.

Why did He not rebuke the use of wine, if it is wicked to drink it as a beverage? His example shows that it is not sinful to use wine under some circumstances. If there had been connected with it any drunkenness and rudeness, if it was destroying families and society, Jesus would have said, "Drink no wine." We must believe that if He were living now, He would say to all of us, "Touch not,

taste not, handle not," for your own safety and the good of others. Abstinence from all that intoxicates is now one of the marks of a good man, and a powerful aid to the Christian religion. Even if one should feel himself able to drink wine without being harmed by it, he would do a noble act if he refrained from it, that he might set a good example and cast all his influence in favor of total abstinence. Jesus would doubtless do this if He were living in our age and country.

But we must be glad that while Moses began his miracles by turning water into blood, Jesus' first miracle was one of blessing; and that He honored the home and the family, and showed us that it is right and pleasing to Him for us to be happy and joyful. We can be good Christians and be merry, and enjoy laughter and sport and the good things of this life. More than this—He gives us the best of everything, as His wine was the best, and better than all, new wine, perfect happiness, in Heaven.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT CAPERNAUM AND JERUSALEM.

Sea of Galilee described.—Its Adjacent Places.—Situation of Capernaum.—April, A.D. 27.—Jerusalem and Pilate.—Current Coins.—Jesus cleanses the Temple, works Miracles, and tells Nicodemus Strange Things.—Mystery.—Old Testament Illustrations of the Work of Christ.

FROM Cana, Jesus and the rest of His family, and the disciples, went down to Capernaum. The distance was not great, but there was a gradual slope all the way, to the Lake of Galilee, which was six hundred and fifty-two feet below the Mediterranean Sea. Capernaum was on its north-western shore.

This sea or lake is often mentioned in the history, and we may take a careful journey around it, to make its places familiar. It is seven miles wide in the middle, and twelve miles long, and surrounded by hills which frame the oval picture. Villages crowded its shores. Bethsaida, originally on the west shore of the Upper Jordan, was built up more largely afterwards on the east side, and called Julias. South and east lay the desert where the feeding of the five thousand took place. It was pasture land, as desert means

in Scripture, and covered with green grass. South, a few miles, was Gergesa, where Satan drove the swine into the lake, and drowned them. Passing round by the bottom of the lake to the west shore, we find Tarichea, a large fortified place, and Emmaus, a small village on the ruins of a burned city. The Hot Springs were near, and a common resort for the sick. Tiberias was a new city inhabited by Jews and foreigners. Dalmanutha gave its name to the district between Tiberias and Magdala. This Magdala was the home of Mary Magdalene. Between this and Chorazin stretched the fertile plain of Gennesaret, so sheltered by the hills, its atmosphere so tempered by the lake, and its fields so well watered, that no place in Palestine was more favored or famous. Beyond Chorazin was Tabiga, the manufacturing suburb of Capernaum. For a mile the road was lined with houses as you approached Capernaum, which was a large town, and known as Jesus' "own city," because He dwelt there much in His life, and performed many mighty works. It was a revenue and military station, where government officers lived, and tax-buyers made their head-quarters. It was gay, worldly, and wicked. The lake lay in front of the city, and behind it a plain skirted by bluffs which rose as you went farther back, till Safed, ten miles north-west, stood more than three thousand feet higher than Capernaum. The centurion commanding the Roman soldiers there was religious, and from his own purse furnished means to build a synagogue for the Jews; and its noble stone pillars, after long centuries, were the only remains of proud Capernaum.

Jesus did not remain here long at this visit, but filled the time with gracious miracles, and won to his service Levi, the revenue collector, afterwards called Matthew. He collected the duties on

goods brought into the town, and had his office at the gate. He was an officer of the foreign government, and was therefore a man of some intelligence, who became a useful servant of Jesus, and one of His historians.

As the Passover at Jerusalem drew near, the Lord set out upon His journey thither with relatives and disciples. The time was April the ninth, A.D. 27. The Holy City was beautiful, and crowded as usual with parties from all parts of Palestine, and from distant countries. Archelaus was banished twenty years before, and governors had succeeded one another till Pilate, the fifth in order, now ruled a people who hated him for his obstinacy and cruelty. He loved money and his own ease, and so received bribes from the rich, and often condemned the poor unheard. He came about the time of Christ's baptism; and one of his first acts was to bring the army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. This he did by night, so that the Jews could not raise a disturbance on account of the images of the Roman Emperor on the ensigns, which the Jewish law forbade. So earnest were the Jews, that, when they petitioned him to remove them, and were attacked by his soldiers, they fell down and offered to die rather than live to see God's law dishonored in this manner. And they prevailed. The hated symbols were put away. But the money in circulation bearing Cæsar's image and superscription, they could not banish. It was a token that "the sceptre had departed from Judah." But the Shiloh was come.

The money in circulation was no longer the shekel and half shekel, which were Jewish; but instead, there were the Greek stater, worth fifty cents, and the drachma, worth fifteen; the Roman silver denary, worth fifteen, and the brass penny, worth a cent and a half;

the farthing, three-eighths of a cent, and the mite, three-sixteenths. The Temple tax had to be paid in the shekel and half-shekel; and Jewish brokers made it a part of their business to change foreign money for those who came from other countries to worship and sacrifice, and give them coin current with the officers of the Temple.

Jesus now first comes as a Teacher to the Passover, and fulfils Malachi's words, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple." The holy men and women who knew and welcomed Him as a child are gone, and the succeeding words of the above prophecy are true: "Who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap." We have seen how the Temple occupied about nineteen acres, and had first of all a wall enclosing a large space called an outer court, or court of the Gentiles. Here merchants had brought in their cattle and sheep, which they sold to those who wanted to sacrifice; some were also selling doves; and others bought and sold the coins that were brought or were needed by the multitudes. Their business was vast, because many hundred thousands came up to the feast; and it was necessary and right; the place, however, was too sacred to be disturbed by the noise and defiled by the filth of business. Jesus was deeply grieved about it, though it was licensed by the authorities, and He bought enough cord of braided rushes to make a whip, and with that He went alone into this court, loosed the cattle and sheep, drove them out, expelled the traders, overturned the money-changers' tables after pouring out their money, and sent the men who sold doves away into the street. The only words He is reported to have said are these: "Take these things hence; make

JESUS CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

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not My Father's house a house of merchandise." The disciples saw it and recalled the Scripture: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." He felt that religion should be as far from money-making as possible. Let them buy and sell in the streets, and keep the Temple sacred to prayer. He was zealous in purifying men from sin, and He began at the Temple by this great act of authority, which became widely known, and awakened much questioning among the Jews, who asked what sign or proof He could show that He had a right to do these acts. His answer was a puzzle, as it might be understood in two ways. "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They understood Him to mean the building where they then stood, and were only able to reply in a question: Can you do in three days what we have been forty-six years in doing? He did not intend to be understood, then, as referring to His resurrection from the dead, because the time had not come for that. He actually meant, however, the Temple of His body, which they would soon destroy, and He would raise from the grave through the power of God. The answer satisfied them for the time, and they did not hinder Him from continuing His wonder-working, which made many think Him a Prophet of God. For one who could build again so vast a building in three days, and who also did such great things as He was doing, they felt afraid to interfere with, lest God should punish them. Could they have seen His real meaning, they would have been no less astonished, for His resurrection was the mightiest of all miracles. The disciples did not see it until He had come out of the grave, when they remembered His words on this occasion, and were strengthened in their confidence in His truth and power.

Jesus was thronged by people bringing their sick to be healed by a look, a word, or a touch, and by the multitudes who were charmed with His discourse. Accordingly when a rich ruler wanted to converse with Him, he came by night for a private interview, which Jesus granted Him. This noble old Jew, a Pharisee, and an earnest worshipper of God, acknowledges Jesus to be a Teacher come from God, and hears strange things, such as that he must be born of God or born again, that God loved the world, and gave His only begotten Son to bring eternal life to every person who should receive Him, and that men who do not believe on Him are condemned. These wonderful teachings sunk deep into the mind of Nicodemus, who is found among the friends of Jesus when the most of the rulers were against Him and delivered Him up to be crucified.

It is pleasant to notice a beautiful illustration from the way of the wind which was then moaning around the house. As there is mysteriousness about the wild wind, lawless, noisy, coming and going we know not whence or whither, such is this new birth by the Spirit, or breath of God in the soul of man. It is real, though you cannot trace it.

Again, He draws from the Old Testament history to illustrate His own office of mercy. He refers to that scene in the wilderness, when so many had been bitten by poisonous snakes or serpents, and all were in terror till Moses made a brazen serpent and lifted it up on a pole so that all could see it, and as many as looked on the image were healed. Thus He was to be placed on a cross and lifted up from the earth, that whosoever should look on Him as the Saviour might be delivered from the poison of sin and death. It was delightful to hear Jesus converse on the sweet and sacred things

which He came to do and teach. The next best privilege is to follow the story as the evangelists have written it in the four Gospels. The good, or those who love the light, as Jesus said to the ruler, will take great and greater pleasure in the words and acts of Him who was and is the Light and Life of the world.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM JERUSALEM TO GALILEE.

JESUS BAPTIZES MANY.—JOHN REPROVES HEROD, AND IS IMPRISONED.—PRIESTS ENVIOUS OF JESUS.—THROUGH SAMARIA TO GALILEE.—WOMAN AT THE WELL.—MAKES MANY SAMARITAN DISCIPLES.—CALLS HIMSELF THE MESSIAH.—HIS SECRET FOOD.—JOY OF THE PEOPLE.—ORIGIN OF THE SAMARITANS.

HE weather was delightful; nights dewy, mornings fresh and cool, days warm, sky clear, grass higher and greener, flowers more abundant than at any other season, trees in full leaf, fig-trees in blossom, reapers and gleaners busy in the barley fields, and all nature smiling upon Jesus and His disciples, as they passed from the city out into the fields and villages of Judea! Jesus went everywhere preaching and teaching, and multitudes heard Him gladly, and were baptized by His authority. They thus openly committed themselves to a new life through His grace and leadership. He had so much talking to do that He allowed His disciples to baptize those who believed on Him as the Christ. They gladly did this, because baptizing is pleasant work to those who love to see Christ's cause going forward. John the Baptist had gone up into Galilee, and was baptizing penitent men and women at a place called Enon, where there was plenty of water. Parties began to arise, and questions were asked about baptism, whether sins were washed away by

water, and whether one man's baptism was as good as another's. Some of John's disciples heard of the great numbers who were being baptized by Jesus, and informed him of it. He at once acknowledged that it was no more than he expected, that his own race was about run, and Jesus must take the lead. He even compared himself to one who assists at a wedding, and rejoices at the happiness of his married friend. He says that Jesus is worthy of confidence and honor, because He is God's Son, and is full of God's Spirit; and men who do not believe on Him must suffer the lasting displeasure of God. John the Baptist was a noble man, and loved the truth, and would not keep it back from fear of merely hurting the self-love or vanity of his hearers. Herod was wonderfully stirred by his preaching and brought to the point of reforming his wicked life. But he fell back from this by the influence of his wife Herodias, and his evil nature in desperate love with sin. This woman was his brother's wife, and Herod had a wife. But he resolved to put away his own, and induce Herodias to leave her husband and marry him. Herod's wife left him in anger, and Herodias deserted Philip and came to Herod, and proved the evil genius and curse of his life. For when John the Baptist denounced his sinful course with her, Herod sent a body of soldiers and carried him away to the castle of Macherus, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, and thrust him into a dungeon. How often have the bold preachers of righteousness been thus cut off from their good work by men who would not have their evil deeds reproved. This miserable woman tempted him to commit the worst crime of his whole criminal career, though the blackest deed is yet to come.

Meanwhile summer wore away, and Jesus had made many dis-

ciples, and become immensely popular in Judea. Thus, afterwards, when the rulers thirsted for His blood, and He could no longer stay in Jerusalem, He always found safe retreats among these outside friends. None of His labors were lost.

His great influence, now rapidly growing, excited the suspicion and envy of the priests, who feared that He would undermine their authority and bring them down. At the same time He heard of John's imprisonment, and prepared to return to Galilee, where He could work without so much danger of interruption. His baptizing at Bethabara now ceased; and He and His attendants set out by the Jericho road. On His way to Bethel, He passed over the route of Elisha, who, nine hundred years before, was mocked by wicked children, and avenged by bears that came out of the woods and slew them. From Bethel they proceeded by the main northern road to Shechem, twenty-two miles. Before they reached this town, they came to Jacob's Well, in Samaria. Jesus, wearied with the journey, sat down upon the curb-stone, while His disciples went away to Sychar, a city near by, to buy some food.

It was six o'clock in the afternoon, and a woman of Samaria came out to the well with her pitcher, and saw this Jewish man seated there, who asked her for a drink of the water from her dripping pitcher. As the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans, she is astonished at His request, and seeks a further acquaintance. They enter upon a conversation, which proves exceedingly profitable. He tells her of living water that quenches thirst forever, and awakens an intense desire in her soul to receive it. He shrewdly manages to remind her that she is a sinner, and draws out her confidence toward Him as a prophet. He also declares the superiority of the

Jews as the source of salvation; but that true worship of God must be spiritual and sincere by all men the world over. This lowly woman also hears Him call Himself the Messiah, for whose coming the Jews were impatiently waiting, and did not yet perceive.

The disciples now came up with their purchases, and the woman left her pitcher and went to the city to tell who was at the well, and invite them to come and see Him. They poured forth in large numbers, not giving Jesus time to eat. But He did not care for food, as He told the disciples, because He had, what satisfied Him better, a convert. He looked up and pointed to the coming crowds as a harvest of souls all ready to be gathered unto God. They were so deeply impressed by Him that they begged Him to stay, and He preached there two days, and they gladly believed on Him as the Saviour of the world.

These Samaritans were not Israelites, but a mixture of Jews and heathen, who had a temple of their own on Mount Gerizim, and received only the five Books of Moses as from God. They were by some means prepared to receive Christ, when His own countrymen turned away in unbelief and hatred. In Samaria, through which He had to journey in going back and forth, He made friends who always gave Him welcome.

CHAPTER XVI.

MIRACLES AND PERSECUTION.

PREACHING APPROVED BY MIRACLES.—HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.—GOES TO NAZARETH, PREACHES, AND IS MOBBED.—AT CAPERNAUM CALLS FISHERMEN.—TEACHES, AND HEALS A DEMONIAC AND PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER.—DEMONS.—THESE KNEW THE NATURE OF JESUS.—JESUS RETIRES LATE, AND RISES EARLY TO PRAY.

JESUS went everywhere preaching to the people that they must turn from sin and begin a new life, because God's kingdom was at hand, and if they would belong to that there must be a change in them. The synagogues were open to Him, and He always had an audience because of His plain and earnest words, which all understood and felt. Besides His conversation and His discourses, there was something wonderful in His labors of love. He performed miracles—acts impossible to any mere man—which were signs that God was with Him in a peculiar manner, and proofs that He spoke the truth, since God would only work in this way with a true man. He would not confirm lies or a liar by these signs. While Jesus is in Cana, where He made the water wine, which was His first miracle, an under-steward of Herod, who collected provisions for the royal household, a nobleman, comes to Him from his house in Capernaum, to beg His help in restoring to health his son who was dangerously sick with

JESUS MOBBED AT NAZARETH.

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marsh fever. Jesus, seeing the confidence of this father and his anxious love for the boy, says, "Thy son liveth; go thy way." He sends him home grateful and believing. The very hour the word was spoken, the son began to get well, and there was great joy in the family, all of whom now trusted Jesus and loved Him. The boy, who was at the point of death, feels at a long distance the power of the word which Jesus utters, because God, who is everywhere at the same moment, drives out the disease and gives him strength to get well. If Jesus had not interposed for him, he would have lost his life. Jesus from any distance saves the soul which has faith, or for which faith is put forth by some other soul.

From Cana He goes to Nazareth, and there visits members of His family, and is found as usual in the synagogue. He enters the reading desk, and opens the Scriptures at the fifty-first chapter of Isaiah, and reads the first verse and half of the second. He then closes the parchment roll, hands it back to the minister of the synagogue, and sits down to address the people from this beautiful text:

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor;
> He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted,
> To preach deliverance to the captives,
> And recovery of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

He tells them that these words are fulfilled in Himself, and preaches a "gracious" sermon. They are astonished, and instead of looking on Him, as He speaks, with trust and love, they begin to doubt and sneer at His pretensions, because He was only Joseph's son, a

mechanic's and a neighbor's son. They are disposed to treat Him as an impostor, a false pretender, because He was once their fellow-citizen and they knew His father and mother. They insult Him, and ask for miracles such as they had heard of His doing in other places. In their rude and blind unbelief they treat Him so badly that He tells them that no prophet has honor in his own country, and quotes the evil conduct of their ancestors, which God punished by passing them by to do good to others. He does not show any fear of these wicked men, who now rise up like a mob and seize Jesus to drag Him out into the streets and kill Him by throwing Him down the rocks headlong. It is a dreadful hour in Nazareth, when a furious multitude thus attack their townsman, who has won so many followers elsewhere, and has a pure name in Nazareth. He has only reproved their sin of unbelief, and resisted their evil conduct, by faithful words. But they will disgrace and kill Him. Jesus exerts His power, and they are unable to hold or hurt Him; and He passes out from their cruel hands and goes to Capernaum. He does not curse, but leaves them to the shame and infamy of their wickedness, leaves them unblessed, and carries His wisdom and love to a city where they are appreciated, and where He can teach and work. The light which the Nazarenes would extinguish, shines by the Sea of Galilee, according to the old prophet's word:

> "The people which sat in the darkness saw great light,
> And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" asked Nathanael. Must we not believe that Jesus was the good, great man He was, not from anything He received at this wicked town, but because He

JESUS CALLING SIMON PETER AND ANDREW HIS BROTHER.

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was the Son of God? It was not because His mother was better than other women, but because God was His Father in a sense high and peculiar. He was the only begotten Son of God. Nazareth could not corrupt any more than it could kill Him, for He was "God manifest in the flesh."

Capernaum is on the Sea of Galilee, and as Jesus walks along the shore, He sees Simon Peter and his brother Andrew fishing with nets, and He calls them to follow Him that they may become fishers of men. They leave their nets, and walk with Him over to the station of Zebedee, where they find his two sons, James and John, sitting in the ship mending their nets. To them He gives the same call, and they join His company. Together they enter Capernaum; and Jesus takes them on the Sabbath into the synagogue where He teaches not from books, from other men's sayings as the scribes or ministers do, but from His own knowledge, and on His own authority. This causes wonder, and He shows them that He has truth, by performing miracles till then unseen among men.

In the synagogue, there was present a man possessed of a devil. When God was manifest in the flesh, Satan was permitted to manifest himself also in the flesh, that the power of God over all evil might be clearly seen. Demons were true fiends living in the same body with a human soul. They were dumb, deaf and dumb, blind and dumb, and lunatic spirits, all called unclean because wicked. The spirit now to be cast out is afraid that Jesus is about to destroy him, and makes the man he possesses cry out, and beg to be let alone. He calls Him the Holy One of God. But Jesus rebukes the devil; and He causes the man to shrink, and throw himself on the floor in spasms. Fortunately, when the man is raised up, he is

found uninjured, and rid of his enemy. This was a new thing, and created great amazement, not only in the city, but throughout Galilee. He went to dine with Peter, and, at the request of the family, laid His healing hand on his wife's mother who was sick with fever, and she arose immediately, and waited on the company, showing thus the wonderful power of His touch. He ever afterwards found a home in this house, and willing hands to serve Him.

Jesus was thronged with people eager to have their friends delivered from demons, diseases, and bodily suffering. It seemed as if the whole city had gathered at Simon's door, and blockaded the street. Their faith was honored by the Lord, for He passed among them, and demons fled along with sickness and pain. The devils He suffered not to speak, because they knew who He was—Christ, the Son of God—and the time had not yet fully come for that announcement to be made so publicly. Far into the night this good work went on, and the kind Healer and Deliverer retires late, but rises to pray long before daylight, and goes away into a solitary place that He may be alone with God.

CHAPTER XVII.

PREACHING TOUR IN GALILEE.

IN SECRET PRAYER.—LEAVES CAPERNAUM.—CROWDS FOLLOW.—A STRANGE PULPIT.—A NEW WONDER.—MIRACLE OF THE FISHES CONVICTS SIMON PETER.—CALLING OF DISCIPLES TO BE FISHERS OF MEN.—SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—HEALING OF A LEPER.—AGAIN HE PRAYS ALONE.—PREACHES IN A JEWISH HOUSE.—A PARALYTIC IS LET DOWN THROUGH THE ROOF AND HEALED.—JESUS FORGIVES SINS.—CALLS MATTHEW, AND DINES WITH HIM.—IS REPROVED FOR EATING WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.—COMPARES HIS PRESENCE TO THAT OF THE BRIDEGROOM AT A WEDDING-FEAST.—HIS RELIGION IS JOYFUL AND GLADDENING.—RAISES JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.—A WOMAN SICK TWELVE YEARS HEALED BY TOUCHING HIS GARMENT.—ANCIENT MOURNING BY MINSTRELS.—TWO BLIND MEN HEALED.—DEAF AND DUMB MAN CURED.—JESUS' FAME SPREADS.—CHARGED WITH BEING IN SATAN'S EMPLOY.—ACCUSATION REFUTED.

WHILE Jesus was praying in a place apart in the wilderness, the people were gathering to ask for His blessing on their sick, or to see His miracles. Simon and others commenced a search for His whereabouts, and when they found Him, they told about the multitudes and their anxiety to keep Him in Capernaum. The crowds also followed, and strove to detain Him against His purpose. But He said His duty led Him to go to other places, and there preach and heal. Accordingly He proceeds on a preaching tour, and soon creates a deep and wide-spread interest in all the land of Palestine; multitudes flock

around Him; and He is obliged to get into a fishing-boat by the Lake of Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee, and from its deck speak to the vast throng who crowded around Him. This was a curious pulpit, and a glorious audience-room. Speaking in the open air is laborious, and Jesus became weary; and yet He found employment and rest in a new wonder, which had such power over His disciples, the fishermen of Galilee, who had followed Him from time to time, that they gave up all, and became close attendants on His ministry, and apostles of His salvation through all their lives.

Simon, James, and John were partners in the business of fishing. They had been casting their nets all night without any success, and on this morning were washing them along the shore. They gladly stopped work to hear Jesus, and when His sermon was over, as they were all in the ship, He bade them push out into the lake, and throw their nets again. Peter told Him they had toiled all night and not caught a fish, but at His request he would try again. He soon learned that Jesus could see into the bottom of the lake, as clearly as into men's hearts. For scarcely had the net touched the ground, before it became so full that the ropes broke, and Simon had to call his partners in the other boat to come and help. Both ships were filled up, so that the water began to run over the sides, and sink them. Then Peter was convinced of God's presence, and he fell on his knees and prayed Jesus to depart from him because he was a sinful man. This was like God's appearance to Adam after he had sinned,—he went and hid himself. Isaiah saw the Lord in the Temple, and was overpowered with a sense of his guilt and uncleanness. At the last judgment, men will call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him who

JESUS TEACHING FROM A BOAT.

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sits on the throne of God. This was the object of the miracle--to impress the disciples with His greatness as the Son of God, so that they would be fitted to go with Him, and suffer and die for the truth. Jesus spoke kindly, and said: "Fear not; from henceforth, Simon, thou shalt catch men." And they gave up business and home to follow Jesus as He went everywhere preaching and doing good.

In the course of His ministry, great multitudes collected on one occasion to hear Him, and He ascended a mountain so that He could stand above the people and make them all hear. It is a beautiful specimen of His manner of teaching; and the audience heard Him with wonder and reverence. It is called the Sermon on the Mount, and treats of the kingdom of God, its nature, subjects, and principles. It begins with the charming beatitudes which show what true happiness consists in; calls Christians salt and light; shows how Christ fulfils the law of God; gives examples of the real inner spirit of the law; teaches practical love and religion; explains the right way of using the things of this world; advises about men's conduct towards one another; calls them to be in earnest about saving their souls; compares those who hear and obey His words, to a man who built his house on a rock beside a stream, and when the mighty storms and floods filled the channel to overflowing, and beat madly against the house, it stood firm and unshaken; and it is packed full of the sweetest and wisest counsels and warnings.

No sooner had He left off speaking and come down from the mountain, than He had a chance to manifest His compassion and power. He had not healed a leper, because those who had leprosy were not allowed to enter a town, or a crowd, or even pass a traveller without warning him. It was thought to be given by contact,

and was so horrible that every restriction was placed on the disease by law. It was considered a judgment of God, and incurable except by His hand. A leper, "full of leprosy," believed Jesus could heal him if He would, and followed Him, hoping for a favorable moment. It came as He descended to the plain, and he fell down before Him with an expression of his confidence, that if He would, the Lord could make him well. The merciful Saviour touched the unsightly body and said: "I will; be thou clean!" The same God who commanded at creation, "Let there be light, and there was light," now spoke, and the poor sufferer rose a well man.

The only compensation Jesus asked was that he should tell no man but the priest, and make such offerings as Moses' law required. Instead of that, he went away and told all who knew him what Jesus had done for him. Jesus made the request He did, because He knew the effect would be to keep Him from preaching in the towns and synagogues, and compel Him to stay outside, and in places where vast numbers could be collected without blockading streets or trampling gardens and cultivated lands. We can scarcely blame the leper for explaining to everybody why he had so changed in appearance, and was able to enter again into the homes of men. But the very goodness of the Lord became a means of annoyance through the object of His mercy.

Jesus withdraws suddenly from the masses who followed Him, and seeks a solitary retreat where He may pray alone.

He thence returns to Capernaum; and as soon as His coming is known, the people crowd around Simon's house as densely as before. The place was full of Pharisees and doctors of the law from all parts, even as far as Jerusalem, who had a great desire to ques-

JESUS HEALING THE LEPER.

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tion the Lord, and witness His works. He preached to the assembly from the doorway. During the sermon an event took place which makes it necessary to describe a Jewish house.

It was square, with its front wall on the street, from which a door in the centre led into a porch, and from this another door led into an open space called a court. The rooms were ranged on the sides of this court, which was usually paved, and often partly covered by a curtain or a movable roof of tiles laid on boards. A stairway led from the porch or near it to the roof, which was flat. Walls ran round it so that people could not fall off into the street or the court; but they were not so high but that persons from neighboring houses could easily climb over.

While Jesus was speaking, four men came bringing on a bed a paralytic man who could not use his arms or feet. So closely packed was the crowd around the door, that they could not get near the Preacher, and they hit on this plan. They went up the stairway of a house close by, out upon the top, and over the wall, till they came to the roof which looked down upon the court filled with His hearers, learned and envious men. They removed some of the tiling, and by means of ropes let the poor fellow down into the midst of the audience. Jesus saw the earnestness of the party, and the paralytic's anxious face, and said at once: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." This was the strangest language the doctors and strangers had yet heard, and they were greatly stirred up by it against Jesus. God only has power to forgive sins; and who is He that takes the liberty of pronouncing a man's sins forgiven? Jesus read their silent thoughts and startled them by revealing His knowledge of their doubts and reasonings, and calling

them evil. Then He showed them that He was able to forgive sins by bidding the poor sufferer take up his bed, or pallet, and go home, and causing him actually to do these things before impossible. The restored man could not but glorify God, and all the people joined him in it, and the whole talk of the city was of the strange things they had seen and heard that day.

When He went forth to the sea-shore to preach again, He called Levi the tax-gatherer from his office to follow Him. This man's Greek name was Matthew, as Peter was Simon's. He left his business and became one of Christ's most devoted followers, and, after He was dead, wrote an account of the Teacher's life. He made a feast for Jesus to which many came who were publicans and sinners, and, as such, not equal in rank or character to the Pharisees. It gave these last persons much offence to see Him thus breaking the rules of society, and keeping company with those less worthy than scribes and Pharisees. They asked the disciples about it; and Jesus answered for them, that He came to make men better. Men already good did not need Him. These persons whom they called bad, were just the ones whom He could improve by His preaching and association. He had no liking for wicked persons themselves. He would always associate with the good, if He consulted his tastes. But He went to the gatherings where He met sinners, solely that He might save them from their errors and vices, and bring them to hate wickedness and choose the right. If men did not know themselves to be sinful and lost, and could not be made to feel their condition, He cared not to look them up and mingle with them. Such were many scribes and Pharisees who thought themselves better than they were, and could not get benefit from Jesus, whose gifts were

for humble people who knew they were in want of His mercy and help.

Some of John's disciples also asked a question why they and the Pharisees fasted often, while Jesus and His followers never fasted. Here they were eating and drinking with great enjoyment, to the astonishment of the others. Jesus brought up the beautiful picture of a wedding feast which sometimes lasted a week, and was filled up with feasting and rejoicing, and compared the new religion, which He was bringing to them, to such a cause of gladness as the bridegroom's presence. When the wedding party have gone, then let there be sorrow and gloom if ever, but not now. He said that old forms and laws were not suited to the new order of things. If you patch old clothes with new cloth, the new will shrink and tear out. Or if you put new wine into old bottle-skins, the wine ferments, and the skins, not being elastic, burst and let the wine out. You must adapt things or they will not succeed. The new religion of salvation was joyful, and all its duties and exercises must correspond with that inner spirit of gladness. The reason why My disciples do not fast is because they have tasted the softer, mellower juice of God's grace, and cannot go back to the harsh practices and burdensome duties of the law. Blessed Jesus! how He strove to shed light and happiness through this dark and sorrowful world! Christians should always rejoice and be glad, because Jesus lives, and leads them.

He had hardly finished the feast when a ruler of the synagogue, Jairus, came in great distress, and with reverence, to Jesus, and besought Him to come to his daughter's and his own relief, for she lay dying, was perhaps already dead. As Jesus rose and followed the heart-broken father, a multitude flocked after Him, and among them

a woman who had been sick twelve years and had spent all her money in trying to get rid of her disease. She had employed the best physicians, but grew worse. She seemed to be able to get near the Saviour, but not to have courage or opportunity to ask Him to heal her. As the crowd pressed round Him, she thought she might touch the hem of His garment and so be saved unperceived. Instantly, as soon as her plan had been carried out, she felt that her sickness was cured, and Jesus knew what had happened by His own feeling. He stopped and inquired who had touched Him. Peter and the rest said, it was not any one in particular, but the multitude were continually touching His clothes. But this did not satisfy Jesus, who wished to do still more for this believing woman, whose modesty was equal to her faith in Him. Then she came trembling with fear and fell down at His feet and revealed the facts. He turned and looked on her with approval, and addressed her with these tender words, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." He only desired men to trust and not be afraid in order to receive all He had to give them, including a right to Heaven. While this was being done, tidings came to Jairus that his daughter was really dead, and he need not trouble Jesus to come. They did not rightly measure His power. For He overheard the mournful message, and saw the ruler's bitterness of spirit, and said: "Fear not; only believe." He then chose three attendants, Peter, James, and John, and accompanied the stricken father to his house. They did not arrive until after the hired mourners had commenced their doleful music and outcries, and the whole place was in a tumult. Such was the custom of those times, that there was no proper feeling shown without great noise, which was chiefly made by persons called min-

JESUS RAISING JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.

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strels, who were paid for such services. Neighbors and friends of course added their weeping and wailing, so that the house of death was a scene of confusion very trying to the feelings. When Jesus came, He reproved these demonstrations, and told them the maid was not dead, but asleep. At this they ceased to cry, and began to laugh—not for gladness, but in scornful, derisive bursts at His ignorance and pretence. They knew she was dead, for they had seen the last breath as it departed from her pale lips, and felt her cold skin, and laid out her stiffening remains. Then they broke out again weeping and wailing; but He put them all out of the room where the dead child lay, except her father and mother and His three disciples. The Saviour went to the couch and took the corpse by the hand, and bade her arise. She at once got up, and walked to her father and mother, who were weeping together. She was weak from want of food, and He ordered it brought to her, that they might know she was both living and well. In order to gain time to get away before the excitement of such an announcement should become troublesome to Him, He ordered them not to tell what was done. In due time, however, the report spread like fire in stubble, and Jesus became more and more famous.

Two blind men, for they like to go in groups or pairs followed Him from Jairus' house, and their prayer was: "Son of David, have mercy on us." They even entered into His friend Simon's house, and professed their belief in His ability to cure them. Thereupon He touched their eyes, which flew open like a door that feels a familiar hand. He charged them not to tell anybody, for He already had no time to preach or to rest. The men used their eyes well, for they came back with a dumb man possessed with a devil,—a more miser-

able state than mere blindness,—and He expelled the devil and set the tongue in motion, and opened ear-gate also. It was a marvel, a strange, unaccustomed spectacle, and people were amazed.

There were some so wicked that nothing would convince them of Jesus' goodness; and they said that He was able to cast out devils because He was in league with the prince of devils. His miracles were all beneficial, His life good, and His teachings holy, as we have seen. The devil is malicious, cruel, false, and wicked, and could not approve of such a life and doctrine as Jesus lived and taught. They were the devil's servants who tried to put down Jesus and finally killed Him. Tried by His whole course both public and private, and by the effects of His example and teaching on men, He stands before us as Son of God and Son of Man, a Being to be loved, honored, and imitated. His enemies, tested by the same rules, appear imperfect, sinful, and unworthy to be heard or followed. Well may we quote their own arguments at a later period: "These are not the words of him that hath a devil: can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

UNCLEAN SPIRITS FALLING DOWN BEFORE JESUS.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

HUNTED FROM JERUSALEM.—WORKING IN GALILEE.

AT THE PASSOVER IN JERUSALEM.—POOL OF BETHESDA.—TROUBLING OF THE WATER BY AN ANGEL.—JESUS AN ANGEL OF MERCY TO A CRIPPLE OF THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS.—JEWS CALL JESUS A SABBATH-BREAKER.—ARREST AND TRY TO KILL HIM.—HE LEAVES THE CITY FOR GALILEE.—ENEMIES FOLLOW AND ACCUSE HIM.—NO SIN TO PLUCK AND EAT BARLEY ON THE SABBATH.—JESUS GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE.—HEALS A WITHERED HAND.—THIS ENRAGES THE OPPOSITION.—CROWDS FOLLOW HIS MINISTRY.—DEMONS CAST OUT.—SPENDS A NIGHT IN PRAYER.—THE TWELVE APOSTLES ORDAINED.—THEIR NAMES.—SERMON ON THE PLAIN.—A CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED.—HIS HUMILITY AND FAITH REWARDED.—RAISES A WIDOW'S SON AT NAIN.—THIS CREATES GREAT FEAR AND WIDESPREAD FAITH.—JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PRISON.—SENDS MESSENGERS TO JESUS.—IS COMFORTED AND HONORED BY HIM.—GRACIOUS INVITATION.—DINES WITH PHARISEE SIMON.—ANOINTED BY A SINFUL WOMAN.—SHE IS FORGIVEN AND SIMON REBUKED.

IT is the year 28, and the evening of March 29th. Jesus and His disciples are in Jerusalem at the Passover. In their walks about the city, they visited the Pool of Bethesda, the House or Place of Mercy. There they found the porches, or covered approaches to the large body of water, filled with sick people, blind, halt, withered. They had collected there, because there was a belief that an angel came down at a certain season, and troubled the water, leaving some influence that healed any person who immediately stepped into it. Jesus saw, among that sad company, a man who had been sick

thirty-eight years, and asked him if he would like to be cured of his disease. The reply was sorrowful, for the poor cripple said he had no one to help him into the water, and as often as he tried to get in some one was sure to be before him, and so he remained a hopeless sufferer. Jesus told him to rise, take up his bed, and go home; and he did so at the word. It was the Sabbath; and according to the Jewish notions, the man had no right to be carrying his bed, though it was a bundle he could put under his arm. The man was condemned by some whom he met; and his only answer was, that the man who cured him told him to do so. The name of his Healer he did not know; and Jesus had quietly walked away. The man was met by his unknown Benefactor, in the Temple, and warned against sin. Then he knew that Jesus was his Healer, and he spread His name abroad. The Jews who were so anxious about the keeping of the Sabbath, began to persecute Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker, and even tried to take His life! They had Him before the Sanhedrim upon this charge; and He answered them in a way which angered them still more. He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Then they were filled anew with bloodthirstiness; for He seemed to make Himself equal with God, and this was blasphemy in their minds, and deserved death.

He was not at all awed by their rage, but went on claiming perfect union with God in His work, and power to judge the world. He told them of the resurrection of the dead, reminded them of John the Baptist's testimony to Him, and pointed to His own works as God's seals to His greatness and authority. He charged sins home upon them, and claimed Moses as a witness to Him. It was not strange, however, that they who disbelieved the written words of

Moses should not receive His spoken testimony. Thus He beat them for a time; but a humble man like Him could not stand up against the powers of darkness and live: so He left Jerusalem, and started for His favorite Galilee. The enemies were on the watch and had their spies out to entrap Him, and found an early chance to attack Him for what they considered Sabbath-breaking.

He went with His disciples on a Sabbath day through a barley-field, keeping the paths that led along the standing grain, and the disciples being hungry, took some of the ripe heads and rubbed them in their hands and ate the kernels. Pharisees saw it, and said they were guilty of harvesting, of working on a holy day. Jesus came to the rescue, and called up the case of David when he was hungry and took the show-bread, which it was lawful for priests only to eat. Besides this, He pointed to the priests who worked harder on the Sabbath than on other days, because it was in the service of the Temple. And, said He, I am greater than the Temple. I am Lord of the Sabbath, and am come to do men good, and the Sabbath is not a hardship imposed on man, but an institution for his benefit.

Soon after this conversation, in which He showed that the disciples were blameless in plucking the ears of barley to satisfy hunger, He was in a synagogue preaching, and there was a man present whose right hand was withered and helpless. The enemies were also at hand, watching to see if He would heal the man on the Sabbath, in order that they might accuse Him if He did. He knew their thoughts, and ordered the cripple to stand up before the audience. Turning to the men sitting on the platform, He asked them whether it was lawful to do good or to do evil, to save life or

to destroy it on the Sabbath, and if they would not lift a sheep out of a pit if they should find the animal in such a sad plight? He did not wait for a reply, for He knew they were ashamed to say no, but remarking with indignant sorrow, that a man was much better than a sheep, He bade the man stretch forth his hand, and he stretched it forth, and found that his right hand was as sound as his left. Instead of convincing the enemies, this kind act of Divine power only enraged them, and they formed a party of two opposite sets of men, who agreed only in determination to kill Jesus.

When He found how spiteful they were, and how well organized was their opposition to Him, He withdrew to His favorite resort, the Sea of Galilee. The people flocked from all quarters to hear and be healed,—from the cities of Tyre and Sidon in the north, and from Idumea in the south. So pressed was He for room to move among the crowds by the shore, that He procured a little boat, and was thus conveyed from point to point, so that all heard, and received proofs of His love and power. As it was an age of great sinfulness, so also was it a time of much sickness. In the midst of wars and tumults such as prevailed then, demons, or bad spirits from hell, found it easy to enter and gain control of men and women. These fallen creatures knew Jesus, and called Him the Son of God. He gave them strict orders not to make Him known, because the people were not fully ready for the whole truth. Miserable victims of suffering were eager to touch Him, for there was virtue in His person to save their bodies from the plagues that afflicted them. In His modest behavior and wonderful grace the prophecies were fulfilled, and the faith of His disciples grew stronger.

It was needful for Jesus, who was giving so much, to get more

from God; accordingly He leaves the multitudes asleep by the sea, and retires into a mountain to pray. He spends a whole night drawing strength from God; and in the morning, He ordains twelve of His disciples, and calls them apostles, or men sent forth, whose duty it should be to go and preach the good news, or Gospel of Jesus, and prove their fitness and reality by miracles. Now that Pharisees and Herodians have joined to destroy Him and His doctrine, He takes measures to hinder their counsels from succeeding. The names of these apostles are: Peter, and his brother Andrew; James and his brother John, called sons of thunder, because of their powerful ministry of the Gospel; James, termed James the Less, and his brother Thaddeus, Lebbeus, or Judas; Philip; Nathanael, or Bartholomew; Thomas, or Didymus; Matthew, or Levi; Simon Zelotes, and Judas Iscariot. We discover among them two Simons, two Jameses, two Judases; and hence must be careful to distinguish them in our thoughts. One of the Judases was a traitor, and he is known by the name of the town from which he came, Kerioth, which was a short distance below Hebron.

Jesus now comes down into the plain, and there continues His healing, and concludes with a discourse called: The Sermon on the Plain. It resembles the Sermon on the Mount, and is full of the same rich thoughts, which make these the best ever preached for the explanation of the moral law of God. The substance of them may be thus expressed: Put away wrong thoughts, suffer injuries, love your enemies, trust wholly in God, and obey Him to the letter. They are closed by that powerful illustration of the two houses founded, one on the sand, and the other on the rock. What an example from the Great Teacher for His apostles in their preaching!

Entering again into Capernaum, the Lord is met by a deputation of leading Jews, who wish to procure His aid for the servant of a centurion, who is very sick. He kindly consents to go to the house, and another delegation from the officer come to stop Him. How is this? Has the man's faith failed? No. He has been generous and built the Jews a synagogue, and has a noble character, even though he is a heathen. His respect for the God of Israel is great; and his reverence for Jesus is such, that he regards himself unworthy of the honor of receiving Him into his dwelling, as a Prophet of God. He says: "Only speak the word, as I give orders to the soldiers under me, and the disease will do Thy bidding." This mighty confidence in His ability pleased Jesus, and He remarked that this was higher faith than any He had seen among His own countrymen, and He healed the servant then and there. The occasion was offered to utter an awful threatening against the Jews, and a promise to men of other nations.

After this last public miracle in Capernaum Jesus goes by the seashore to Magdala, and thence strikes across the country. Sixteen miles from Capernaum, the road led past the base of Mount Tabor, with its round top a thousand feet above them, and its sides green with trees and gardens. Five miles to the south rose Little Hermon like Tabor's twin. The land between was nearly a level plain, though the water on the east side ran toward the Jordan, and on the west toward the Mediterranean. By the north-west side of Little Hermon, on a lovely swell of ground, stood the walled town of Nain; its name means "Beautiful." As Jesus and His company, consisting of the disciples and a large number of people, approached the gate, they were met by a funeral procession which was very numerous.

They were about to bury a man who had been the only son of a widow, who was weeping as only such a mourner can weep. Her tears touched the Saviour's heart, and He addressed the woman with cheering words, and went forward and touched the bier on which lay the corpse. The bearers stood still, and as all eyes were fixed on the Lord, He said: "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" He was all ready to be laid under the darkness of the tomb, but at this voice he woke and sat up on his bier and began to speak. Then He who had recalled him to life gave him as a precious gift to his mother. It was a sudden joy that burst upon her soul as she clasped him living to her breast, and walked with him back to their home. It caused tremendous fear among the beholders, to see this corpse revive and return to the city with his happy mother. They looked on Jesus as a great prophet, and saw in His acts the presence of God with His people. And the tidings of this instance and proof of compassion filled all the land of Judea, and the regions beyond, with the thought that He was God's prophet.

Meanwhile John the Baptist lay in prison, and heard this report of the works of Jesus. He had said honorable things of Jesus, and believed in His mission; but now his mind wavered, and he sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus whether He was really the Christ, or whether they still must look for one who would meet all their wishes and hopes. The men saw the works of Jesus and heard His good tidings to the poor, and bore a kind message back from Him to their teacher in Herod's gloomy castle by the Dead Sea. When they were gone He gave John a high character. This greatly pleased one party, and equally angered others who had not been baptized by John. Then Jesus administered a sharp reproof to them, and used

a comparison which showed that He knew something of the ways of children. He also upbraided or rebuked in terrible terms the wickedness of those cities, where he had performed so many miracles and preached so often the word of God, because they did not repent and turn to the Lord. Then He thanked God for making known saving truths about Himself and His Son, to men who were not wise in their own eyes, but humble and teachable as babes. He comforted His sorrowful heart by the fact, that such was God's will that proud unbelievers should be unblessed, and lowly souls that trusted Him should be saved. He could not close with harsh words, and so He invites all weary and burdened persons to come to Him and find rest. His heart was meek and gentle, and His service was not painful or burdensome, but light and easy.

After this exciting scene and sermon a Pharisee, Simon, who had before entertained Jesus, invited Him to dine. He did not show the guest perfect courtesy, for there was no servant sent to wash His feet when He shook off His sandals at the door. The meal was necessarily somewhat public, because of the multitude who pressed so closely upon His person. And among those who found their way into the house was a woman who had fallen into shameful sins; but hearing Jesus' preaching, she had been made sorry for her bad life, and turned from it to follow Him. Conscious of her ill repute, she came very stealthily, and kneeled behind the couch on which Jesus reclined. To be so near Him caused her such joy that she let fall her tears like rain upon His feet, and wiped them away with her long hair. Then she kissed His feet, which had borne Him on His errand of mercy to her. And drawing from her bosom an alabaster vase of sweet perfumed ointment, she broke the neck of the vase and poured

out the fragrant contents on His feet. So humble was she, that she did not venture to anoint His head. Her lowly spirit could not lift itself from the earth, and showered all its love on His feet. Jesus was pleased with this; but Simon secretly thought that He was not a prophet, or He would have known that she was a sinner and driven her off. He soon found out his mistake, for His guest read his thoughts, and openly reproved him, by contrasting his want of perfect hospitality with this poor creature's attentions. She came not with any impure motive, but like a debtor who has been forgiven a large debt and excused from its payment: she has had much forgiven, her many sins have been wiped off the record of God, and she loves Him who has procured this mercy, with a corresponding fulness of soul. Turning to her He bids her depart in peace, saved by her faith. Brave Teacher, Thou art the sinner's Friend. In the great day of judgment, Thy voice will rebuke those who have wilfully neglected Thee, but welcome to eternal glory the high and the low who have loved and honored Thee!

CHAPTER XIX.

SECOND CIRCUIT IN GALILEE.

BUNYAN'S COMPLIMENT TO THE WOMEN WHO FOLLOWED JESUS.—EXCESSIVE LABORS.—SERVANT OF THE DUNGHILL GOD.—THE AUTHORS OF THIS SLANDER CONFUTED AND CONDEMNED.—SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAH.—REPUDIATES MERE EARTHLY RELATIONSHIPS.—DISCOURSES IN PARABLES.—THEIR USE AND MEANING.—THE SOWER.—THEY MUST TEACH THE TRUTH, OR LOSE IT.—OF THE TARES.—THE SEED GROWING SECRETLY.—RELIGION LIKENED TO THE MUSTARD-SEED.—TO LEAVEN.—TO TREASURE IN A FIELD.—TO THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.—TO THE NET.—STORM ON THE SEA OF GALILEE.—GREAT TERROR OF THE APOSTLES.—JESUS IS WAKENED FROM SLEEP, AND STILLS THE WIND AND WAVES.—SITUATION OF GERGESA.—SWINE FEEDING ON THE HILL.—TOMBS.—MANIACS.—JESUS CASTS OUT DEMONS AND SENDS THEM INTO THE SWINE.—EFFECTS ON THE MANIACS, THE SWINE, AND THE GERGESENES.—JESUS DEPARTS AT THEIR REQUEST.—IS REJECTED AT NAZARETH.

JOHN BUNYAN says: "I read not that man ever gave to Christ so much as one groat, but the women who followed Him, ministered to Him of their substance." On this preaching excursion through all the cities and villages of His loved Galilee, Jesus was attended by the twelve apostles, and by many noble-hearted women, who used their money, of which they had abundance, to support Him and them in their labors of love. These women had experienced great blessings from His miracles and preaching, especially Mary

of Magdala, Joanna, whose husband, Chuza, was Herod's steward, and Susanna. He was so gentle and pure, so powerful and courageous, so wise and heavenly-minded, that women gladly shared the hardships of His journeys that they might enjoy His society and ministry, and help His good work on.

In one place He was so pressed with duties that He could find no time to eat, and His friends said He was out of His head, or beside Himself, and they went to restrain His zeal by forcing Him to stop and refresh Himself. He healed a sufferer possessed with a demon that made him dumb and blind; and this excited His enemies who were watching. They could not deny His power, for the eyes of the blind saw, and the tongue of the dumb spoke. There was malice enough in them, to lead them to say that He was Beelzebub's servant, instead of God's Son. Now this was the name of a heathen deity, and meant dunghill god. It was a vile slander, a foul insinuation. Jesus showed them how foolish their charge was, because even the devil had wit enough not to tear down his own kingdom, as he would be doing if he used Jesus. He then said they were guilty of blasphemy, because they called the work of the Holy Spirit which He was performing, the devil's work. As long as they continued to do this they were in danger of eternal damnation, or God's endless displeasure. Because this blasphemy, or evil speaking against God, showed, like poisonous or bad fruit on a tree, that they were at heart full of evil, and justly under condemnation. Wrong words constantly used come from a wrong mind, and are the outgoings of a heart that God hates and will surely punish.

Scribes and Pharisees, still filled with spite and unbelief, came to

Him at Capernaum, and asked for a sign that He was truly Christ. He refused it, and sternly told them they were wicked and vile, and should have no sign except one like the burial and resurrection of Jonah. He meant that His own dying and rising would be a sign that ought to convince; but, on account of their hypocrisy, it would only harden, and make them more guilty.

While He speaks to His enemies, and to the people, His mother Mary and His brothers stand outside and cannot get near Him on account of the crowd of hearers close around. Some one pushes in, and tells Him they wish to see Him, and hopes that He will show His partiality, by ordering the dense mass to part and let these His relatives come near. But this He does not do. Instead, He raises His hand, and pointing to His disciples calls them His mother and brothers, and adds: Whosoever shall do the will of My Father, God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and My mother. There was a higher relation than that of flesh and blood.

Multitudes gather, and He goes out by the sea, and mounts His pulpit, the ship's deck, and thence discourses in parables.

A parable is some familiar thing, "thrown in by the side" of the truth, to illustrate one or more points. We shall now hear eight which were spoken, to set forth the nature of the Kingdom of God. They are simple yet very deep, as the disciples found; for they had to have them privately explained. Jesus used these forms of speech, which both uncovered and hid the truth, partly as a judgment upon the people who wickedly failed to yield their hearts to God and their lives to goodness. He also made the truth attractive, and set men to searching for His meaning.

In the parable of the sower, or, as the Germans say, of the four

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Jesus and the Samaritan

kinds of ground, He represents a Palestine farmer sowing barley or wheat, by casting it from his hand over all the field. Some seeds fall on the paths which are trodden hard, and there lie exposed for the birds which hop along after him. Now this refers to the preacher who throws out many truths to an audience, some of which lie on the surface of men's minds, and are caught away by the devil, and of course do no good. The sower has some parts of his field lying on the top of rocks where the soil is very thin. The seeds on these soft spots spring up quickly, because the sun heats the ground fast, and causes the germs to sprout out at once. But the soil rapidly dries, and there is no moisture for the plant, which cannot send a root into the stone, and it speedily withers. Some hearers of good words instantly take them in, and are happy; but their minds are shallow, and their hearts rocky, so that when trouble comes on them and men persecute them for their opinions, they give up, and all their good resolutions dry and die. The sower has places in his field where thorns have taken root, and seeds fall there. These do not grow as soon as the thorns, which suck up all the nourishment of the ground, and shade with leaves the earth around them, so that the late-rising barley or wheat sickens and is too weak to bear any fruit. Some men hear the truth, and go away to business, women to worldly care, and youth to pleasure. They have no time nor strength for the growth and nurture of their convictions and principles. Riches deceive them into thinking that they are right and safe if only they prosper. And thus they fail of being useful and of God's approval. But the laborious farmer has some good soil rich and ready for the seed, and it produces abundantly. Every bushel sown brings him thirty, sixty, or even a hundred. So also the

preacher has some hearers who love the truth, cherish it in their hearts, and obey it more or less perfectly.

When Jesus explained His parable He earnestly told them that candles were lighted to shine, and they were instructed in order that they might become instructors. If they should boldly and fully teach what they had seen and heard, they should have more and more given them to communicate to others. If they were selfish and hid the truth, they themselves should suffer by losing it.

Another parable of the tares He gave them to show how good and bad men live together in this world, and even in the church, till the judgment. A farmer sows good seed; and his enemy in the night follows his steps and sows tares, which look like wheat, but really are worthless. They come up together, and the farmer is urged to have the tares pulled out, but he says wait till the harvest, and then the tares shall be bound and burned.

He compared His religion, or the kingdom of God, also to the seed growing secretly. His disciples unfold their Christian life just like wheat, which sends up a blade or stalk, and grows an ear, that ripens into a full head, and invites the reapers.

It is, He said, also like a grain of mustard, which is, at its planting, the least of all seeds, but becomes a tree where birds find rest and shade.

He likens religion also to leaven or yeast, which is placed within a mass of flour, and soon is felt by every atom. Though small and concealed and obscure at first, the power of Christianity is to be felt by the whole man and the whole world.

When the multitude were dismissed Jesus cleared up the mystery of the parables. His manner of doing this we have seen;

and it appears in the case of the tares. Christians are wheat, His workmanship; tares are the devil's followers; the angels are reapers; hell is the fire that burns the tares, and heaven is the eternal home of Christians.

Religion is like treasure which a man finds in digging or ploughing. He is joyful, and goes and sells his property and buys the field and gets the coins, or rich vessels, which some one long before left there for safety. The point is this: religion is worth everything else that a man has, and he may well sell all sins and false pleasures to get this.

The same truth is conveyed by the man who deals in pearls, selling all and investing the proceeds in the pearl of great price.

The fisherman's net catches fish that are eatable and that are worthless: and they are separated. So shall good and bad men be divided in the Day of Judgment. The disciples profess to understand these parables, and Jesus tells them to make free use of them, and to originate from themselves new ones with which to teach the people.

He closed His teaching and went away; and as the people pressed around Him, He gave orders to the apostles to take their ship and cross the lake. The stern-post of their boat was high, and had a seat, and a padded cushion to lean the head against. This Jesus took, and was soon fast asleep, rocked by the motion of the boat as they rowed out into the deep. Suddenly, as the rowers were in the midst of the sea, the wind freshened, and the waves broke angrily against the boat. The fishermen, used to such sudden gusts from the mountains, did not fear till the wind became a tempest, and the billows broke over the vessel and threatened to

swamp it. Jesus slept on amidst the commotion and terror, overcome with fatigue, and peaceful in His Father's love. "For so He giveth His beloved sleep." There came a mighty sea that ingulfed them, and made the shivering boat stagger as if ready to sink. Peter awoke Jesus and cried: "Lord, save us; we perish." He answered with calmness: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then He rose and looked out on the boisterous scene. The angry wind seemed in league with devils and enemies to destroy the new faith. It was as if the whole church tossed on that tumultuous sea, with only a plank between it and death. Jesus rebuked the storm, and bade the waters be still. The wind fell as if dead; the waves staggered back into the bosom of the deep; the waters were like glass in smoothness; and the stars shone over deep Galilee, tranquil under its Lord's Almighty presence. There was awe in that ship's company. They were amazed, and troubled that their Teacher should have such control over the untamed winds and the lawless waves! It was a new revelation of His greatness.

He directed their course to the coast below Gergesa, five miles south-east from Capernaum, where He was going to rest awhile. The town stood back from the shore on a creek which ran through a ravine. The southern bank of the ravine, or hollow water course, rose to a rocky height, which sloped to the water's edge. On this high hill were feeding a drove of two thousand swine. These were an abomination to real Jews, who were forbidden to eat pork. But the men who owned this herd were foreigners.

It is to be observed that between the lake and the hills that rose on all sides, there was a narrow strip of land, which gave the inhabitants a track for a road.

Another peculiarity is noticeable; the sides of the rocky hills were full of tombs hewed by the living for the dead. In the sides of these graves were spaces cut, large enough to receive the body wrapped in its shroud and embalming spices. Some of them were very old, and the dead were gone; others were new, waiting for occupants.

There were two crazy persons who dwelt much of the time among the tombs in this hillside near Gergesa. They were possessed with devils, and exceedingly fierce, so that travellers dared not pass along the road by the sea. One of them had spells of quietness, and was then taken and chained. But when the possession returned, he broke every chain and raged like a wild beast. Indeed, no fierce tiger could equal his fury. He was naked, hair long, person filthy, and covered with gashes and blood, where he had cut himself with sharp stones. When the boat touched the shore, the watchful demoniac saw the Lord get out and walk along the beach; and he ran with all speed to meet Him. His companion in misery followed close at his heels, and both were soon prostrate before Jesus, and engaged in conversation. The disciples were clustered in their boat, afraid of these howling, bloody, and dangerous demoniacs. The human, the satanic, and the Divine here met in the morning stillness by the Sea of Galilee! Jesus saw the nature of the case, and commanded the unclean spirits to come out of the men. Then they argued and plead with Him, calling Him the Son of the Most High God, not to torment them, or send them out of the country, or drive them back to the bottomless pit, the abode of lost spirits. They asked to be suffered to go into the herd of swine on the hill yonder. This was not a request from two, but

from many, for their name was "Legion." Jesus said, "Go!" This world was preferable to their own place in hell; and by going into the swine they could do harm, and even finally cause Jesus to leave the region alone to their rule. At His permission, they left the bodies of the men; and Jesus at once called the apostles, who took them in charge, and had them washed and clothed, and they came and sat quietly at His feet, and heard His word. The devils flew to the swine, which at once felt their influence, and began to run furiously down the mountain side, and plunged into the sea. The swineherds could not stop them, and all perished in the waters. The keepers saw the maniacs at Jesus' feet, calm, dressed, and apparently happy, and went racing to the town, and told the whole tidings. These reports greatly excited the inhabitants, and they flocked out to see the Lord, and look over the ground where the swine had leaped down in their flight to the lake. The reality equalled the utmost effort of their imagination. There was the group—Jesus and His restored demoniacs by the shore, holding pleasant intercourse. These awful disturbers of the peace were clothed and at rest, harmless and joyful. But the swine were choked to death under the deep waters. This vast property was gone, and the people were filled with fear at the possible consequences of Jesus' presence in their vicinity. Two saved men were not worth as much as two thousand swine. Then they begged of this new and wonderful Stranger, who had quietly dropped down among them, to leave the country. They thus showed what sort of people they were—fit for the business of raising and eating swine, but not for the service and society of Jesus. The devils were cunning not to wish to be sent out of the land of the Gergesenes. They knew

what would come of the loss of the swine. For Jesus at once set sail for His chosen Galilee, where He was loved and His work prized. The healed men craved permission to go with Him over the sea; but He sent them home to their friends, to make known God's compassion and power which they had experienced. He was not to be without a witness, even when His Son was sent out of a region by the selfish, blind, wicked inhabitants. These men, set free from their persecutors by the Lord, went everywhere in Decapolis, publishing His mighty deeds.

Jesus was welcomed by the people on the other side, who were waiting for Him. Though rejected once at Nazareth, He again seeks to do the people of His own country good, and is admitted to the synagogue, where He creates great astonishment, and awakens renewed unbelief and hatred. The same words and works had different effects in Gergesa and Nazareth, from what they produced in Capernaum and many other cities. Jesus was filled with wonder at the treatment they bestowed on Him; and He said that it was according to the old saying: "A prophet is not without honor, except in his country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." The country about was ablaze with His fame, and in the city where He was born and reared, men would not receive Him as God's Son. He cared less about applause and honor for His own sake, than for the sake of others; because where men did not have confidence in His mission and power, He could not consistently, by His rules, heal, and teach, and bless as He wished to do. So Nazareth was almost unblessed. A few had cause to remember Him with gratitude for curing them and their friends; but the mass of the citizens felt no benefit from His visit.

CHAPTER XX.

APOSTLES ENDOWED: JOHN BEHEADED.

THIRD CIRCUIT IN GALILEE.—COMMANDS TO PRAY FOR REAPERS.—APOSTLES ORDAINED AND SENT INTO THE FIELD.—TWO BY TWO THEY LABOR AND ARE BLESSED.—MURDER OF JOHN BAPTIST.—DANCING AND CRIME.—HEROD PUNISHED BY CONSCIENCE.—JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES MEET AND RETIRE TO A DESERT.—THOUSANDS FOLLOW.—JESUS COMPASSIONATES THEM.—GROUPS FIVE THOUSAND MEN, WITH WOMEN AND CHILDREN.—GIVES THANKS, AND DISTRIBUTES BREAD AND FISHES.—THE GRATEFUL PEOPLE WOULD CROWN HIM.—DISMISSES THEM.—APOSTLES SET SAIL FOR THE WESTERN SHORE.—HE PRAYS ON THE LAND.—KEBLE'S HYMN.—CONTRARY WINDS.—JESUS WALKS OUT TO THE SHIP.—ALARM OF THE APOSTLES.—IT IS I; BE NOT AFRAID.—PETER WALKS ON THE WATER.—SINKS, BUT IS SAVED AND REBUKED.—GENNESARET IN THE MORNING.—HIS COMING WIDELY KNOWN.—HEALS AND SAVES MULTITUDES.—TEACHES IN A SYNAGOGUE.—HE CLAIMS TO BE THE BREAD OF LIFE.—SOME FORSAKE HIM.—PETER PLEDGES THE APOSTLES' FIRMNESS.—HE CALLS JESUS THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.—THE LORD CALLS ONE OF THEM A DEVIL.

FROM Nazareth, in the beginning of A.D. 29, Jesus commences a third circuit in Galilee. He pursues the same course of teaching and miracle-working which He has begun. His heart yearns over the multitudes who seem like sheep that have no shepherd. They are without teachers who love them and know the truth; and they are hungry and starving for knowledge and care. He calls the attention of the apostles to this sad state of things. He compares the land to a harvest field of ripe grain, some of which is wasting, and all is ready to

be gathered. The laborers who shall cut and save the grain are very few. He asks them to pray to God, the Lord of the harvest, the Creator of men and the Owner of their bodies and souls, that he will send the people leaders, who shall bring them home to their Father's house, and save them from sin and hell.

That their actions may correspond with their prayers, He takes the twelve men who have been His followers, scholars, and apostles, and endows them with ability to work miracles, and to preach the Gospel, or good news of God's presence among them in the person of His Son Jesus. He also gives them full instructions respecting several things about their ministry. Their preparation was easily made; they were to go as they were, without money or food, without purse, or satchel, or extra clothing.

The places where they were to go were villages occupied by Jews; as the time had not come for them to labor with others.

Their manner or mode of labor was to be this: In every town they were to inquire for a family of good repute, and when they entered the house say: "Peace be to this house." If they were received, their blessing should abide with the family. Otherwise it should return to them. This house in which they were made at home should be their permanent abode. Their business was healing and preaching.

They were to escape persecutions by flight, if possible. If they were arrested and brought before the authorities, they were to trust wholly in God, who would deliver them, and make their sufferings witness to the truth of their teaching.

It was a terrible and yet glorious picture which he spread before them; and the instructions were full of earnestness, solemnity, and

truth. Such an ordination sermon is seldom heard as Jesus preached to His apostles. Then they went forth, two together, and Jesus by Himself, to spread the Gospel and save the lost.

The apostles performed their work as He commanded them, and were blessed. During their journey occurred an event of great and sad interest. John, after an imprisonment of sixteen months by Herod the Tetrarch, and three years from the commencement of his preaching, the earnest Baptist, is beheaded in the Castle of Macherus. Jesus had gone into the region of Galilee lying near Perea, in the vicinity of Herod, and was busy in His ministry when this took place.

Herod was reproved by John for his crime in taking his brother Philip's wife, and she was bent on having his blood to pay for his boldness. She and he ought to have repented; but intoxicated and maddened by sin, they went a long step further and resolved to murder the faithful reprover. The people reverenced John, and this made the ruler fear to kill him. When his birthday came, he made a feast at Macherus Castle, and invited his chief men. Wine flowed freely, and dancing-women entertained the revellers. Ladies did not commonly attend these feasts; but at last Herodias sent her beautiful daughter Salome into the banqueting room to dance. So greatly were they pleased, that Herod swore an oath that he would give her whatever she should ask, even to the half of his kingdom. She went out and told her mother, who instantly ordered her to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a tray. Herod would have recalled his promise, but feared to do so, lest he should be humiliated before the company. Her order was given, and the bloody deed was done. Fearful price of a dance! Years afterwards, Herod's real

THE EXECUTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

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wife's father, the King of Arabia, met Herod in battle and destroyed his army. The Jews believed this defeat to have been a judgment of God for his murder of John. His guilty conscience did not let him rest day or night; and when he heard of Jesus and His miracles, Herod said it was John risen from the dead, and working in spirit through Jesus. This showed the disturbed state of his mind, and the ignorance and foolishness that were his keepers. He was unhappy, and tormented by fear and the recollection of his guilty deed. Had he listened to John, he might have had a different experience, and been saved.

The disciples of John, who had taken his headless corpse and buried it, went to Jesus and told Him the sorrowful story.

Then, by common consent, Jesus and the apostles came from their various places of labor to Capernaum, and there rehearsed the history of their preaching and healing. That they might be more free to converse, on account of the great numbers coming and going, He requested them to go away with Him into a secluded part of the country, across the lake, near Bethsaida on the north-eastern coast.

They had scarcely left the beach and turned their course toward those hills, before the people saw what direction He was taking, and made ready to follow Him. It was near the Passover time, and thousands were on their way to Jerusalem. Tidings went swiftly from mouth to mouth, and soon an army of men, women, and children flocked from every place to overtake the Lord in His retreat. Some went out of curiosity, because they had either seen His miracles or heard of them; some enjoyed His preaching, and felt that a journey of miles on foot was nothing, if it would give them a

chance to hear Him; some had sick ones to be healed, and carried them to His meetings; and some were moved by true love to His person and character. Here they come, running, walking, riding, sailing, from all parts of the country to find Him. He saw them, and His tender heart went out towards them in compassion. He had seen lambs caught in a wintry storm, had known of sheep being torn by wild animals and ferocious dogs, had often noticed their helplessness, when they had no shepherd, and His gentle nature sympathized with these poor creatures. Much more did He feel for His countrymen and their wives and children, who were in danger from diseases, from devils, from bad men, and from their own ignorance of their God and His truth. He could not even allow Himself to rest from labors in their behalf. He taught them by preaching and by private instruction, comforted, warned and guided them, and gave them healing and every help they asked.

Now a new necessity arises, on account of the nature of the place where He was when they found Him. It was pasture land among the rocky hills, where nobody could live. His pulpit was a stone, and people clustered below Him to hear. Sundown was near when the discourse ended, and the apostles reminded Him that the eager multitudes had no food, and there was none near at hand. They must not be kept too long, but sent away for their supper and lodging, to the towns that were close by. He told them this was unnecessary, and ordered them to feed the assembly. He asked Philip where they could buy bread for the people. He had no intention of buying, because He knew they were too poor; but He wished to test him about the possibility of such a thing, in order to prepare his mind for what He was about to do. He had not forgot

Himself, and held the audience too long for their good. When Philip said that a large sum would be needed for bread enough to give each person a little, and all were of one mind about it, He sent them to look up their store of provisions and report to Him. Andrew tells Him of a boy there who has five barley loaves and two small fishes, but adds that these are nothing among so many hungry men. Jesus took the lad's stock, and gave orders to have the company seated on the green grass in groups of fifty each. There were present, as they found out by this arrangement, more than five thousand men, besides women and children. They knew just how much to carry to each company, and all were served alike without confusion or complaint. Jesus was wise as well as merciful. The miracle was preceded by giving thanks. This was the Lord's habit —to acknowledge God's goodness and ask His blessing at every meal. Then, with their baskets came the twelve, and, as Jesus broke up the bread and fish, each one had enough to fill his basket. The supply seemed endless; for as often as they came from distributing among the companies, they were refilled. And so the good work went on, till every one of that vast number was supplied with all he needed. The wives and mothers and little ones all feasted on the abundance. Christ's blessing made the bread sweet and the fish palatable. It was a great source of surprise as they ate, to see the increase go on, and when the meal was over the people felt that Messiah had come, the very Christ of God, and they leaped with one mind to the conclusion that He must be crowned King of the Jews then and there.

Meanwhile Jesus gave orders to gather the fragments, broken, untasted pieces of bread, and fishes, that nothing might be lost. It

was a beautiful lesson of economy or saving to all the multitudes, as the apostles went about with their baskets picking up the remains of the feast, and bearing them full to Jesus. Though He could multiply loaves and fishes at will, yet fragments must not be wasted, because they were God's gift. To leave them on the ground would be to waste and despise His bounty. To gather and use them would be the best way of showing their gratitude, and of drawing from Him future blessings. Thus the Son did honor to the Father.

But He would not receive men's honors, when they wanted to force Him to proclaim Himself a King. He dismissed the people, and hastened away into a mountain to pray, while His apostles set sail, by His wish, for Capernaum.

THE BOY'S STORE.—(KEBLE.)

"WHAT time the Saviour spread His feast
For thousands on the mountain's side,
One of the last and least
The abundant store supplied.

"Haply the wonders to behold
A boy, 'mid other boys he came;
A lamb of Jesus' fold,
Though now unknown by name.

"Or, for his sweet, obedient ways,
The apostles brought him near, to share
Their Lord's laborious days,
His frugal basket bear.

"Or might it be his duteous heart,
That led him sacrifice to bring,
For his own simple part
To the world's hidden King?

JESUS FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

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"Well may I guess how glowed his cheek;
How he looked down, half pride, half fear
Far off he saw one speak
Of him in Jesus' ear.

"'There is a lad, five loaves hath he,
And fishes twain, but what are they
Where hungry thousands be?'
Nay, Christ will find a way.

"In order, on the fresh green hill,
The Mighty Shepherd ranks His sheep;
By tens and fifties, still
As clouds when breezes sleep.

"Or, who can tell the trembling joy—
Who paint the grave, endearing look
When from that favored boy
The wondrous pledge He took?

"Keep thou, dear child, thine early word;
Bring Him thy best: who knows but He,
For His eternal board,
May take some gift of thee?

"Thou prayest without the vail as yet:
But kneel in faith: an arm benign
Such prayers will duly set
Within the holiest shrine.

"And prayer has might to spread and grow,
Thy childish darts, right-aimed on high
May catch Heaven's fire, and glow
Far on the eternal sky:

"Even as He made that stripling's store
Type of the feast by Him decreed,
Where angels might adore,
And souls forever feed."

When darkness had fallen on land and sea, and the disciples were rowing to Bethsaida of Galilee, toward Capernaum, away from the neighborhood of Northern Bethsaida, Jesus was alone in His mountain closet, praying to His Father. The wind blew stronger and stronger over the dark waters, and the sea was boisterous. They were going against both wind and waves, and made slow progress. Jesus looked out in the direction they were going, and saw them toiling without making much progress. He came down from the lonely place, and walked towards them. They did not know that His eye was on them, or that He was near, until they saw Him walking on the water. So unexpected was the sight, that they thought it was a ghost, or spirit without body, and they became frightened. It was about four in the morning, when objects were very indistinct, and they might easily be alarmed at such a spectacle. For Jesus came near enough to be dimly seen, and yet He seemed to be going past them. When their cries of fear were heard by Him above the roar of the waves, He called aloud to them, and said, "It is I; be not afraid." They knew the voice pealing through the darkness, and were instantly relieved of trouble. Peter in his excitement prayed to be allowed to come to Jesus in the midst of the sea. This prayer was granted, and forth the bold apostle stepped from the boat, upon the waves, which were solid under his tread. But as he walked on, he felt a fresh gust of wind, and bethought himself that he was in danger, and instantly began to sink. Jesus reached and caught him, and helped him as he prayed, "Lord, save me." Then He rebuked his want of confidence, and his giving way to doubt. Jesus felt hurt at Peter's distrust, when He had bid him come. The apostle should have known that all was well, and no

power could harm, while he was obeying the Lord. They came together into the ship, and the company, relieved of their hard labor in rowing by the ceasing of the wind, worshipped Jesus as the Son of God. Gladly did they welcome the Lord; and yet there was wonder in their minds, for they forgot the miracle of the loaves, while they were tugging at the oars in the stormy sea. They were human, mortal, and sinful yet, unlike Him whom they followed and reverenced. By the dawn of day they were at the shore, where the lovely plain of Gennesaret sloped upwards from the lake. It was three miles to Capernaum. The country was thickly settled, and His landing was soon known by many, who spread the news far and wide. Jesus had used His power so freely that no one feared He would exhaust it. Whosoever would come within His reach, would be blessed. There was no reason for concealing His coming; and so, many became messengers to people in out-of-the-way places, and these before neglected ones were able to receive benefit from Him, as He passed from village to village through all the land of Galilee. The Saviour's course was one of conquest; but He fought only devils, diseases, errors, and sins. He was Prince of Peace. Little children, and old men and women, were brought into the streets along which He went; and with feeble voices they plead that they might touch the hem of His robe. No one sought His aid in vain. God qualified Him with the disposition and ability to heal all who believed, and requested His assistance for themselves or others. A touch by sufferers healed. His power and influence were now at their highest pitch.

He discoursed with great earnestness in a synagogue the day after His feeding of the multitude; and this was the occasion. The

people who were fed, and many others who heard of the miracle, came to the city and sought for Jesus. When they found Him, they inquired when He came back, for they had seen His ship leave the shore while He was alone in the mountain. This was a needless question, one of mere curiosity, and He did not answer it, but told them they were looking for Him because they had enjoyed a good supper without any effort on their own part. Then He gave them a lesson on feeding their souls with what would make them imperishable, with His words given by God the Father. They knew that He was sent from Heaven, because of the seal set on His truth by the miracle. They referred Him to Moses and the manna. He answered that He was the bread of God, and they must believe, love, and serve Him, in order to be saved and blessed forever with life. There were enemies who heard Him say these wonderful things; and they doubted whether a man whose father and mother were known by them, could rightly profess to be bread sent down from heaven. Christ read their injurious thoughts, and answered them, by saying that disciples were drawn to Him by God's grace and power, that He was truly the bread of life, that His flesh and blood given for the life of the world were the one only means of eternal happiness, and that those who received Him as their Saviour should live forever.

These sayings were not all understood by His scholars and admirers, and they stumbled over them, and fell away from Him. They did not know how to trust Him for the full knowledge they required, even after all they had seen of His great power, and felt of His tender love. He told them that they ought to understand His true meaning, which was not that His flesh and blood were to be

eaten for eternal life, but that His teaching should give their souls the food they needed to satisfy. He was not disappointed in losing these disciples, because He knew by Divine revelation who should stand and who fall.

He however asked the apostles if they were going back with the rest. He wanted to test and establish them, and to receive encouragement that might soothe the pain caused Him by the wicked backsliding of others. Simon Peter, the "Rock," answered in a tone of perfect confidence, and with words which showed that they were all truly satisfied with Him. They had no other Lord, no other source of eternal life; and they felt the strongest assurance that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. He looked around upon these twelve, whom He had chosen as His apostles, and solemnly said of those for whom Peter had spoken so confidently, "One of you is a devil." Not only had the voluntary followers gone back from Him, because He offered Himself as their Saviour on peculiar terms, but also in the chosen circle there was one worthy to be called "a devil." Jesus knew this man to be Judas, the treasurer, who carried the money-box, but He did not disclose his name at that time. He set the apostles upon watchfulness, each for himself, lest this terrible prophecy should light on him.

It was now needful for Jesus to be on His guard against the bloodthirsty Jews who sought to kill Him. The third Passover of His public ministry He did not keep in Jerusalem, because of His enemies, but confined His labors to the remote places in Galilee, where He had so many friends that His foes were not able to take His life, and thus prevent His teaching and doing good.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CONFLICT DEEPENS.

JESUS OBSERVES THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD AT CAPERNAUM, APRIL, A.D. 29.—DEFENDS THE DISCIPLES WHO WERE BLAMED FOR EATING WITH UNWASHED HANDS.—OFFICE AND CHARACTER OF THE SCRIBES.—THE PHARISEES KEEP TRADITIONS OF MEN, BUT NOT GOD'S LAW.—HE CALLS THEM HYPOCRITES.—SEEMING AND BEING GOOD.—VISITS SAREPTA.—DESCRIPTION OF THE ROAD.—SALT WITHOUT SAVOR.—A HEATHEN MOTHER'S FAITH AND PERSISTENCE.—HER DEMONIAC DAUGHTER HEALED.—EAST OF THE SEA OF GALILEE.—RETIRES TO A MOUNTAIN.—THOUSANDS FOLLOW.—CURES A DEAF MAN.—SIGHS AND PRAYS.—KEBLE'S POEM.—JESUS AGAIN MIRACULOUSLY FEEDS THE PEOPLE.—AT DALMANUTHA MEETS OLD AND NEW ENEMIES.—DESCRIPTION OF THE SADDUCEES.—CONTEST WITH THEM.—BEWARE OF THEIR LEAVEN.—HYPOCRISY.

JESUS celebrates the memorable passing over, by the Angel of Death, of the Jews in Egypt, because it was God's appointment. He always pleased God. As the plotting of His haters aimed to destroy Him, He observes the days of unleavened bread in "His own city," Capernaum. They began April 17, A.D. 29.

The cakes of unleavened bread were baked around a movable stone oven shaped like a pitcher. The baker gathered grass, flowers, weeds, and other combustible stuff, and after drying it on the housetop, he bound the whole in bundles for fuel. He first made a fire in the oven, and then spread the thin dough on the outside, where it

JESUS WALKING ON THE SEA.

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was baked, in quick time, into cakes, which were eaten with roasted lamb, and a sauce made of dates, figs, and raisins. For seven days these cakes were eaten, and thank-offerings made to God. It was a beautiful custom for the ancient Israelites; and Jesus made it equally full of meaning and beauty for His people, the true Israel of God.

Though he stayed away from Jerusalem, and thus defeated the plans of plotters, they were not satisfied to leave Him alone in His work, but followed Him up with hatred and criticism. On this line they asked why His disciples ate without first washing their hands. These questioners and fault-finders were scribes and Pharisees. The last-named were a party or sect in Jesus' time; and the scribes, almost all of them, belonged to this class, though some were Sadducees, and some Essenes. The scribes copied, read, and explained the laws of the Jewish people, found in the Old Testament, and in other law books. They were men of great learning, and very particular about the observance of the law. They were generally earnest Pharisees, and came together to attack Jesus. Men held them in high estimation; so that it was a saying that if only two men got to heaven, one would be a scribe and the other a Pharisee. It was a fierce and unequal battle, when these men made war on Jesus, if we think of Him merely as a man, and a mechanic without chance for learning. If we consider His perfect character, and His power and wisdom, and also see that He was Son of God, we shall not fear for Jesus in the end. They may kill Him, or do any other violence, but He must conquer, because God is with Him.

These learned and self-righteous men see the disciples sit down to their meals, and take the bread and dip it in the central dish to moisten it, without having first washed their hands, and they are ap-

parently very indignant about this neglect. Jesus had done as the law required, but He defends the disciples who omitted superstitious requirements in this instance. It was proper to have clean hands at the table, and probably the disciples were neat and cleanly in their habits. But the Pharisees made a religious duty of this washing; and they had also commanded people to wash cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables, as ceremonies which pleased God. These things were not God's laws, but traditions of men, customs handed down from former times, and forms imposed by very strict persons to wash away sins.

Jesus knew this, and met the critics or fault-finders with a case in which they really disobeyed God's law by one of their own traditions which they blamed the disciples for not keeping. God's commandment by Moses was this: "Honor thy father and thy mother." It was a just requirement, and had a promise added of long life, to show how highly God regarded it, and to encourage children to honor their parents. One of the ways by which they were to be honored was, by careful attention to their necessities when they grew old, or became helpless from any cause. That was God's law. The men of other days made a rule that contradicted this, and released children from the support of their parents, on condition that they should pay into the Temple treasury what they otherwise would and should give to their parents. God said, "Let him that curseth father or mother die the death." But the priests said that children might let the curse of poverty and neglect fall on their parents, provided only they gave the money needed to support them into the priests' hands for the Temple service. Thus they made God's blessed law of no effect which commanded to honor father and mother. Upon this ground

Moses coming down from Mount Sinai.

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Jesus quoted a terrible prophecy against them from Isaiah, and called them "hypocrites." This was the worst thing He could say, and it was true. The prophet's words are these:

> "This people honoreth me with their lips,
> But their heart is far from me.
> Howbeit in vain do they worship me,
> Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

There were many other things like this in their practices which He said they were guilty of; and this led Him to say to the people at large, with much emphasis, that men were not really defiled or made unclean by eating bread that was soiled, or by anything they took into the mouth; but things which come out of men defile them.

The disciples came to Jesus with a report that the Jews were very much offended by what He had said. No wonder they were angry, for He had cut them to the heart by His faithfulness. They had called Him out, and He was too strong for them. Though they raged, and threatened, and planned His death, His confidence lay in God's purpose to uproot all that was false. They were blind men leading the blind; and when they came to any place of difficulty, they would stumble; and, at last, they would all fall into confusion and lose their souls.

The disciples privately asked Him what He meant by saying that men were not defiled by that which they took into the mouth, but by what came from them. He was somewhat indignant at their dulness, but He explained that what was unclean in food was cast out of the body by its own nature; and that out of man's heart, or from within his soul, came forth all sins. Even the outward vices all

arose from the inner life, the unseen spirit of man. As the plant or tree is in the root under ground, so bad actions spring out of evil hearts. Thus by a careful use of all forms of instruction Jesus put before His disciples the necessity of having new and true hearts. They must be, and not merely seem, good. The real life is within men, however they appear to others, and this God judges. But if the heart is good, the life is naturally and necessarily so, according to a man's knowledge of right and wrong. If he means well, and is properly taught, he will do well, and please God. It is not offensive to Him to see men eat with unwashed hands; at least, He does not look on it as a meritorious act, a religious service, to wash the hands before every meal. It is remarkable how many points had been made against Jesus up to this time.

1. Cleansing the temple.
2. Forgiving sins.
3. Commanding a man to carry his bed on the Sabbath.
4. Making Himself equal with God.
5. Healing on the Sabbath.
6. Pulling "corn," *i.e.* barley, on the Sabbath.
7. Eating with unclean company.
8. Allowing the disciples to eat with unwashed hands.

Besides these public charges of the Pharisees, there were private complaints, such as Simon's, when He suffered the anointing of His feet by the sinful, yet penitent woman; and the sending of the devils into the herd of swine. They were foolish and wicked accusations, which He met to the satisfaction of all good and candid minds.

Jesus now journeys to Sarepta, a town in Syria, midway between

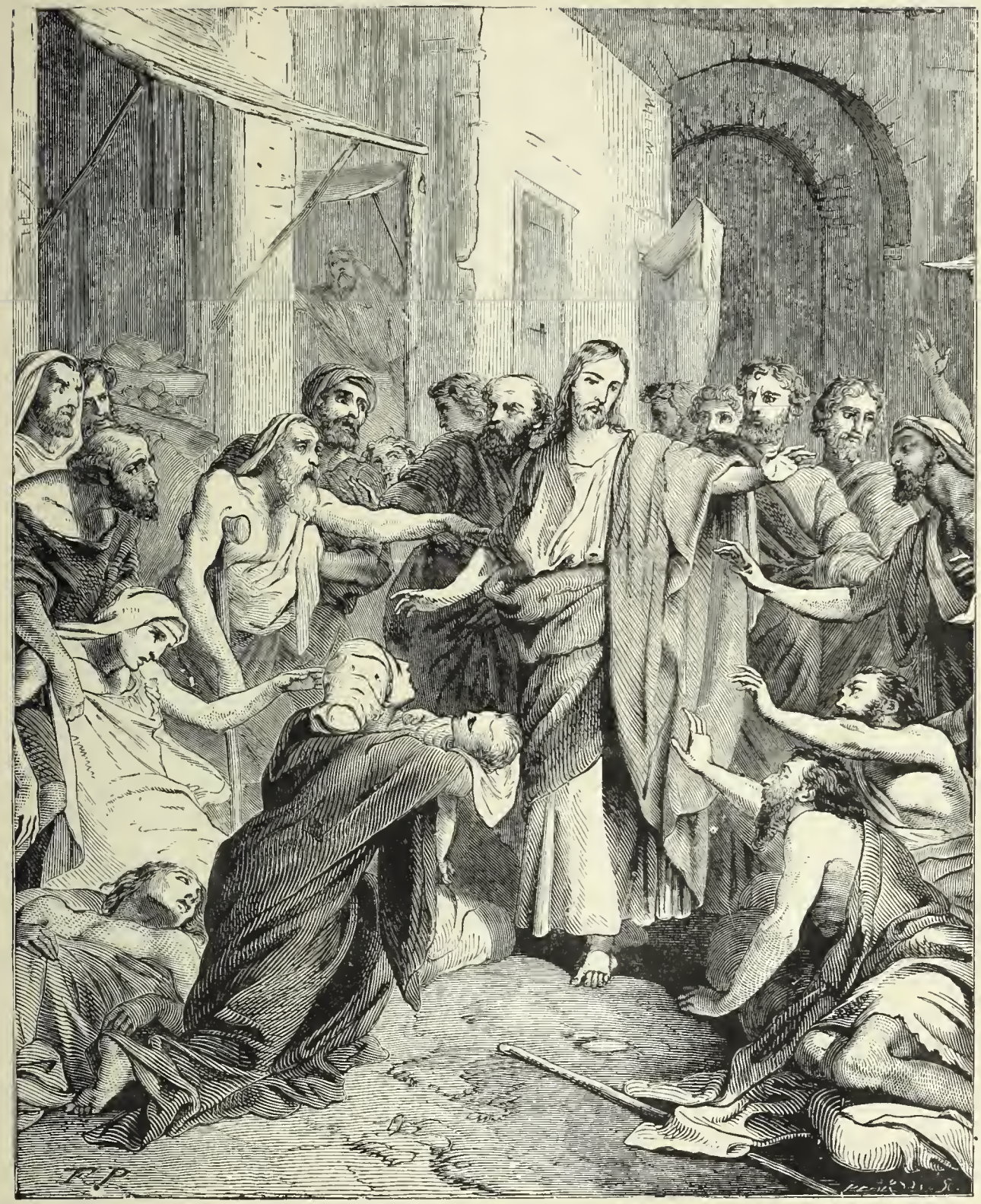
Tyre and Sidon, on the Mediterranean coast. He travels slowly among the villages and neighborhoods that crowded the way to Kadesh-Naphtali, and Safed. Deep ravines through which winter torrents flowed fast and furious, jagged hills perforated with caves and yawning with wide cracks, old haunts of robbers in lawless times, and the town on a hill with walls around, were some of the features of the landscape. Safed was three thousand feet higher than the waters of the Sea of Tiberias. The castle in the centre of the city rose high, and flocks of sparrows around it kept up a constant *tsippor*, their Hebrew name. For two hours from Safed, the road wound through valleys and gorges, and among hills, and came out upon a dry, stony ridge, and the view across the open pasture ground was splendid. The land sloped down to a gorge and a stream, beyond which terraced hills rose away towards the Great Sea. On the right, four miles off, was Lake Merom, half as large as the Lake of Galilee. The plain was covered with wheat fields; in some the grain was in shocks, and in some it was standing uncut. The harvesters were still busy, as Jesus looked off upon the scene. East of the lake, round hills separated the plain on that side from the sandy district beyond; while knots of travellers dotted the line of the caravan road to Damascus. North of the lake an impassable marsh, covered with waving cane-brake, stretched toward the foot of Mount Hermon. They crossed a wild gorge, in whose perpendicular cliffs hawks and eagles nested and reared their young.

When they arrived at Kadesh among the hills, they found a synagogue, whose door-posts were of stone twenty feet high. From this limit of the Jewish country, they proceeded into Syria. Fifteen miles of travel north-west through a country of vineyards, brought

them to a bridge which spanned the river Leontes. It is about the size of the Jordan, and for thirty miles tears through the roots of the mountains of Lebanon in a channel, which is eight hundred feet deep in one place, and one hundred in another, and so narrow that a man may reach his hand across it. At the bridge the river flowed peacefully toward the sea. They found Sarepta fifteen miles farther on; it was Elijah's home, where he caused the barrel of meal to hold out so wonderfully, in the house of the widow who entertained him. This seaport was one hundred miles north of Jerusalem, and was a depot of salt from Cyprus. It was not obtained by boiling or mining, but gathered from salt marshes. When stored upon the ground floor the salt at the bottom spoiled and became worthless, except to be "trodden under foot of men," and so was used for pavement. This fact gave Jesus His strong expressions about those disciples who became tasteless, lost their savor, and were as worthless as salt used for the street.

Jesus came over to the seacoast and lodged with a friend in order to be quiet, and prepare for future labors. But His countenance was familiar to some who instantly made His coming known. There was a woman who was a heathen, and had a daughter grievously vexed with a devil, and she besought His help. Her language was wonderful: "O Lord! Thou Son of David." This was the second time He had been addressed by His royal title. It is curious to notice how often He was called somebody's "son."

Son of Mary—once.
Son of Joseph—once.
Son of the Carpenter—once.
Son of Man—fifty times.



JESUS HEALING THE SICK IN THE STREETS.

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Son of David—eight times.
Son of the Blessed—once.
Son of the Highest—once.
Son of God—twenty-five times.

This woman's voice was loud, and her manner so earnest and persistent, as she followed Jesus and His apostles, that they begged Him to grant her request and send her away. But He said, that He was sent only to Israelitish people, and not to persons of other nations. Could anything prevail, after such petitions failed, and such a statement was made? The mother-heart is terribly importunate for her child, and she comes and kneels before Him, and offers a short prayer: "Lord, help me." To her, He, in His wisdom had not yet spoken a word. And now, He answers with a seeming denial. It is not a suitable thing to take children's food and give it to dogs. That was apparently harsh, and yet there was something in His tones and manner which encouraged the quick-witted petitioner to turn His reply into an argument in her own favor. I know I am a heathen, in Jews' opinion a dog. And dogs are allowed to eat the crumbs that fall from the table where the children are eating. He was for once entangled in His words; but He allowed this purposely, in order that He might bring out, and show the marvellous confidence which this woman had in Him. He instantly put forth His power and healed the demoniac girl. He bade the kneeling woman rise and go home to her restored daughter, the reward and prize of her prayer of faith. She went home to rejoice with her household over the healing. Jesus turns back from the Mediterranean, and crosses the Jordan at Jacob's bridge, where multitudes collect around Him. He makes a short

circuit among the towns east of His favorite Lake of Galilee. He visits Bashan, renowned for timber and cattle. The country was high and rolling, with deep watercourses furrowing the land, and was cooler than other parts of Palestine. On the west, it broke off toward the sea in terraces, and on the east sank gradually down into the Arabian Desert. He performed vast numbers of unrecorded wonders here, of which two are now to be related.

It was June, and the grain was being threshed and winnowed, and stored in granaries. Swine were feeding in the oak groves, and sheep in the pastures. Jesus retired into a mountain, and there received the people with all their wants and woes, their sick and lame and demoniacs. There was one poor man brought, who was deaf, and spoke with difficulty. They kept asking Him to put His hands on the afflicted man, and restore to him his hearing and speech. For some reason Jesus took the sufferer aside from the multitude, perhaps to impress his mind more deeply with a sense of dependence and gratitude. When they were alone, He touched the man's ears, and put saliva on his tongue, and with a sigh looked to heaven and said: "Be opened." In a moment the man could hear and speak. By using the spittle, and by touching the organs diseased, He caused the man to see how necessary God's blessing was to any real cure. His sighing was caused by His pity for the sorrows of men, and the sins which are the roots of all pain and suffering. This sympathy of Jesus was growing as He saw more of men's unhappiness and misery.

He told the astonished people who gathered about Him after this miracle, that they must not publish it through the country. His reasons were, that so many would crowd around, that He would

have no chance for preaching, and this was really more important than healing; and furthermore, they were so eager that they made too long journeys, and did not wait for His coming where they could enjoy Him without so much discomfort. But they went everywhere with the tidings of His power and goodness; and, as He foresaw, thousands poured in on Him. True, they glorified the God of Israel, which pleased Jesus; but they became hungry in the mountains, and this made Him sad. He called the attention of His apostles to their want of food, and said He was unwilling to send them away (for they had not enjoyed a full meal for days), lest they should become faint with hunger, and fall down in the roads. And many o them lived a long way off.

"THE DEAF AND DUMB."—(KEBLE.)

"The Son of God in doing good
Was fain to look to heaven and sigh.
And shall the heirs of sinful blood
Seek joy unmix'd in charity?
God will not let Love's work impart
Full solace, lest it steal the heart;
Be thou content in tears to sow,
Blessing, like Jesus, in thy woe.

"He look'd to heaven, and sadly sigh'd—
What saw my gracious Saviour there,
With fear and anguish to divide
The joy of heaven—accepted prayer?
So o'er the bed where Lazarus slept
He to His Father groaned and wept:
What saw He mournful in that grave,
Knowing Himself so strong to save?

"O'erwhelming thoughts of pain and grief
Over His sinking spirits sweep!—
What boots it gathering one lost leaf
Out of yon sere and wither'd heap,
Where souls and bodies, hopes and joys
All that earth owns or sin destroys,
Under the spurning hoof are cast,
Or tossing in the autumnal blast?

"The deaf may hear the Saviour's voice,
The fetter'd tongue its chain may break;
But the deaf heart, the dumb by choice,
The laggard soul, that will not wake,
The guilt that scorns to be forgiven;
These baffle e'en the spells of heaven;
In thought of these, His brows benign
Not even in healing cloudless shine.

"No eye but His might ever bear
To gaze all down that drear abyss,
Because none ever saw so clear
The shore of endless bliss;
The giddy wave so restless hurl'd,
The vex'd pulse of this feverish world,
He views and counts with steady sight
Used to behold the Infinite.

"But that in such communion high
He hath a fount of strength within,
Sure His meek heart would break and die
O'erburden'd by His brethren's sin;
Weak eyes on darkness dare not gaze,
It dazzles like the noon-day blaze;
But He who sees God's face may brook
On the true face of Sin to look.

"What then shall wretched sinners do,
When in their last, their hopeless day,
Sin as it is shall meet their view,
God turn His face for aye away?
Lord, by Thy sad and earnest eye,
When Thou didst look to heaven and sigh;
Thy voice, that with a word could chase
The dumb, deaf spirit from his place

"As Thou hast touched our ears, and taught
Our tongues to speak Thy praises plain,
Quell Thou each thankless, godless thought
That would make fast our bonds again.
From worldly strife, from mirth unblessed
Drowning Thy music in the breast,
From foul reproach, from thrilling fears,
Preserve, good Lord, Thy servants' ears.

"From idle words, that restless throng,
And haunt our hearts when we would pray,
From pride's false chime, and jarring wrong,
Seal Thou my lips and guard the way;
For Thou hast sworn that every ear,
Willing or loth, Thy trump shall hear,
And every tongue unchainèd be
To own no hope, no God, but Thee."

The apostles wondered where bread was to be got for four thousand men besides women and children, who had been on short supplies for days. They seemed already to have forgotten the former feeding of five thousand. They had short memories and hard hearts. Jesus asked them what amount of food they had with them, and found it to be very small,—seven loaves and a few little fishes. The people were seated again, that they might all be properly fed, small

and great, old and feeble, women as well as men. Then Jesus gave thanks, and began to distribute to the apostles, who waited on the people. It was a beautiful sight to see those multitudes all abundantly helped to bread and fish by the love of Jesus and the kindness of His apostles. What a glory shone round His head, as He performed this mighty act of goodness! When the feast was over, seven baskets full were left, and gathered up. If there had been other hungry hearers, they too would have been fed. Jesus' power extended to all who came and trusted it.

The multitudes were now sent home with glad hearts, for their sick and suffering were all blessed, and every one was satisfied. Then He and His apostles crossed the lake to Dalmanutha, and were there met by their old enemies the Pharisees, who were joined by the Sadducees, another sect of the Jews. This was chiefly composed of men of wealth and high rank—men who lived easily, without labor, and had the good things of this life in great plenty. They did not believe that men had souls, or lived beyond the present world. To them there were no such places as heaven and hell; and no other world cast shadow or light on this, for them. They did not believe in God's providence—His love and care for men, as His earthly children. They were left entirely free from all notice or interference by Him, and went through life like animals or trees. Their purpose was to have a good time while they lived; and they had money enough to do this according to their notions of enjoyment. They saw that it was foolish to be vicious, and better to live moral lives, and they shunned drunkenness and crimes, and pursued respectable paths. They were nice people, and gave themselves little trouble about public affairs. The Roman government protected their lives

and property, and they were willing to be ruled from Rome, and made no trouble for the officers.

They were now moved to battle Jesus; for He had roused the whole land, and was sowing broadcast the good seed of the kingdom—truths about God and the soul, and another world, which they did not like. So they came to Jesus for a sign from heaven. If He could only show some proof that God in heaven had sent Him, it was possible they might—well, they might go home and wonder! Nothing more. They were like boys who ring door-bells and then hide. Their object is mischief, and not to be let into the house. So Jesus looked on these enemies as mere idlers or mischief-makers, who would not believe the truth, and obey it, however plainly He should show it to them. He called them hard names, which truly described them; and asked them why, when they could tell by signs what the weather would be, they could not also read the meaning of His great works, and so decide upon His merits? He again alludes to the sign of Jonah the prophet—referring to His own burial in the earth, and resurrection by the power of God. This sign is the only one they shall have. With this answer, which they could not understand, He leaves them, and takes a ship and sails back to the eastern shore of the lake. In their haste the disciples forgot to buy bread, and as they look about perceive that they have but one loaf, and are in much trouble, for fear that they shall have to go supperless to bed. Jesus then startles them by bidding them beware of the leaven of these His enemies, whom they had left behind. Ah, said the apostles to one another, He is anxious to have us be careful about the bread we buy. Or He has some anxiety because we have no bread. But He reproved them for such troublesome thoughts

about food, and such low ideas of His teaching. He reminded them that He could feed them, as He had fed the multitude. It was a bad spirit, heart, thought, and influence which He was thinking of, and against which He warns them. The apostles understood it finally. and were able to receive the lesson He intended. They must avoid hypocrisy, or seeming to be what they were not, pretending to think one thing and really thinking the very contrary thing, professing friendship when they felt hatred, and acting against their actual belief and purpose.

JESUS HEALING THE BLIND.

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CHAPTER XXII.

CIRCUIT IN CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

JOURNEYS NORTHWARD.—OPENS THE EYES OF A BLIND MAN.—VARIETY IN WORKING.—SCENES BY THE WAY.—PRAYS ALONE.—INQUIRES MEN'S OPINIONS OF HIM.—PETER CONFESSES HIM TO BE SON OF GOD.—CONGRATULATES PETER AND FOUNDS HIS CHURCH ON THIS CONFESSION.—GIVES THE KEYS.—THE CHURCH IMPERISHABLE.—FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.—PETER REBUKES JESUS AND IS CALLED SATAN.—MEN MUST TAKE THEIR CROSS AND FOLLOW CHRIST.—THE COMING OF HIS KINGDOM WITH POWER.—SCENERY ABOUT CÆSAREA.—MOUNT HERMON.—TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.—MOSES AND ELIJAH.—EFFECTS ON THE DISCIPLES.—THEY COME DOWN TO THE PLAIN.—THE APOSTLES DEFEATED BY A DEMON AND MOCKED BY THE SCRIBES.—JESUS CASTS IT OUT.—MIGHTY POWER LODGED IN FAITH.

N His way northward through the territory of Philip, He comes to Bethsaida, which lies east of the river. This Philip was not the husband of Herodias. That one lived in Rome, and was the son of Mariamne; while this Philip, governor of Trachonitis, and best of all the first Herod's family, was Cleopatra's son by Herod.

The time of this circuit was July, when travelling was done in the morning and late afternoon. A blind man at Bethsaida was presented for healing, and Jesus led him out of the town. He wet his eyes with spittle, and the man saw "men as trees walking." This was the beginning of the recovery. He then put His hands, those blessed hands so full of power, on the straining eyes, and bade him

look up. Then he saw clearly and was healed. He sent him away home, and would not allow him to go into the town, or tell any citizen of what had been done for him. Jesus was not confined to any single way of giving sight, of curing sick people, casting out devils, or doing the wonders of which His last years were so full. There was danger of men's thinking that He depended on a set form, or a particular mode, and that He would be powerless or less successful if he did not use them. By His different methods He was able to show His independence. He was Lord of all. He could save men by means that pleased Him. He would never do wrong; but He rose above all modes and instruments when He chose, and stooped to use the humblest, if He pleased. His purpose seemed ever to plan the most good. His loins were girded up with truth, in His lips was the law of kindness and His heart overflowed with compassion, as a fountain, that never dries or diminishes, pours out sweet, bright waters.

To Lake Merom from Bethsaida the distance was ten miles among rolling bluffs, and across several creeks full of water, and the dry beds of others. The Jordan, on their left, flowed sometimes peacefully along between sloping banks, and again plunged over cataracts or roared through narrow gorges. It falls more than a thousand feet between the two lakes. The Damascus road crossed the river at Jacob's Bridge, a little below Lake Merom. Here was a town with a large hotel for travellers, of whom thousands were constantly passing. Never a day wore away without caravans being seen, troops of soldiers, companies of merchants, or groups of worshippers on their way to distant places. Often did the king's messenger ride up in hot haste, dismount, and with a single exclamation:

"In the king's name!" press into service the first beast and its owner he met, and order himself carried to the next town, or beyond, as he chose. There was often resistance; but the law permitted such oppressive acts, and Jesus commanded His followers to obey the law, and even more than obey,—if called to go one mile, be willing to go two. This was the best policy; because men that went unwillingly tempted the officer to punish them; and more time was spent in quarrelling than would have sufficed for the required service. Gentleness and goodness, and even submission to wrong, generally show wisdom.

Jesus and the apostles crossed the Jordan at Jacob's Bridge, and went up on the eastern side of the river sixteen miles to Cæsarea Philippi.

On the road Jesus sought a quiet place for prayer; for though He was ever good and full of love to God, He never neglected to pray in secret. Probably prayer was necessary to Him, as it is to all who try to serve God in this world, where so many influences turn men aside from God and the true end of life. In this exercise, He was found by the apostles; and He asked them what ideas and opinions men had of Him, as they talked of His claims and character. One party supposed Him to be John the Baptist. We know the falseness of that notion; and they ought to have known it, who lived in the same country. Others said He was Elijah; and others that He was Jeremiah; and others that He was "one of the old prophets risen again." When He learned from them what men outside were thinking, He asked them what they thought. There was one who spoke promptly for them all, and gave Him great satisfaction This was Peter's answer: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of

the living God." That meant that He was the Prophet promised long before, the One who was to come according to the Scriptures, and real Son of God, having His nature and attributes. That pleased Jesus. Let enemies call Him what they would, if His apostles only knew Him and valued Him at His actual worth. He replied to this confession: Simon, thou art Jonas' son; but God My Father has made you a new man and revealed this truth to you. You are a happy man. This confession shows you to be worthy the name I gave you at first—"Peter;" and upon it I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell, the power of destruction, shall not prevail against it. He Himself should be swallowed by the grave, and death should overwhelm all living men, and cities and nations should perish, but the church should survive. He also promised Peter "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and that whatever he bound or loosed, in his teaching or apostolic work, should have God's approval. He was to know all the truth needed for the salvation of the world, because he confessed the corner-stone truth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The same great pledge was given to all the apostles. The Spirit of God showed them all necessary things, and controlled them as teachers and founders of the religion of Jesus.

"Oh where are the kings and the emperors now?
Of old they went and came;
But here the Church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same."

This was their great office; and their work thus done in God's power should never fail. But as the time of preparation had not yet passed, and Jesus told them this as a part of their schooling to be

the world's teachers in true religion, He earnestly gave them orders not to speak to others, yet, as they did to Him. Keep this glorious "rock" confession closely hid in your own minds till the proper moment, and then publish it everywhere, even to the end of the world.

Right in this connection, after He had drawn out their views, and given them His blessing and promise, He began to converse on a painful subject. He gave them to understand that He must go to Jerusalem, and there be put to death by the hatred of the leaders. He also said that He should rise from the dead after the third day.

They did not think so much about the rising, as about the suffering and dying. And so Peter took it on himself, poor foolish lover of Jesus, to rebuke, to blame, and find fault with Him. So weak are the best men sometimes! As if it was Peter's business to interfere with the Son of God! He found out his mistake very soon, for Jesus turned sharply upon him with stinging words. The apostle had much to learn from his Master, and by his own bitter experience, before he could take his place as the authorized leader of the Church. Jesus called him "Satan," bade him get behind Him as offensive to the sight. His heart was yet worldly, and not like God. Oh how much truth he knew, and yet how much more he was ignorant of, and sorely he needed God's purifying grace to change him into a suitable follower of Jesus.

From this view of weakness among His chosen, he turns to speak to the multitude as well as to them, and shows what he must expect who wishes to follow Jesus. There was a burden to carry, painful, and in the eyes of men disgraceful. It was like the taking up of his cross by a criminal whom the Romans were about to crucify. He must expect to suffer shame and injury who becomes one of the

Lord's disciples, since He Himself would be put to death on a cross If any said that this was too hard an undertaking, and preferred his ease and the world's favor to the heavy and humiliating cross with Jesus' blessing, he would lose his soul, lose himself, and be cast away from God and heaven. If he should choose Christ and the cross, the Gospel of salvation and its attendant trials, even the loss of all life's good things would be repaid by the Lord at a later day. For He was coming again, surrounded by the glory of God, His Father, by brightness and splendor, and by holy angels—beings who sang the song of peace at Bethlehem, and rejoiced over His victory. Then should men who were ashamed of Him, feel a deeper shame because they had doubted and despised the Son of Man. They were afraid to own Him before wicked, polluted men; He would be unwilling to acknowledge them, in the presence of the pure and good, as they saw Him gather all nations, to reward every man according to his works. He told them these terrible and glorious things, in order that they might have no excuse for their unbelief and foolish pride. He would encourage the humble and timid believer, whose song should be:

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shalt be!
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, or hoped, or known,
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and heaven are still my own!

"Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Saviour, too;

Human hearts and looks deceive me—
Thou art not, like them, untrue;
Oh! while Thou dost smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate, and friends disown me,
Show Thy face, and all is bright.

"Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest!
Oh! 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While Thy love is left to me;
Oh! 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee.

"Go then, earthly fame and treasure!
Come disaster, scorn, and pain!
In Thy service, pain is pleasure;
With Thy favor, loss is gain.
I have called Thee Abba, Father!
I have stayed my heart on Thee!
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather,
All must work for good to me.

"Soul, then know thy full salvation,
Rise o'er sin, and fear, and care:
Joy to find in every station
Something still to do or bear.
Think what Spirit dwells within thee;
Think what Father's smiles are thine;
Think that Jesus died to win thee;
Child of heaven, canst thou repine?

"Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith, and winged by prayer!
Heaven's eternal day's before thee;
God's own hand shall guide thee there:

Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise."

To those who looked as if they scarcely credited His words, or inquired when these things should be, He went so far as to say that there were men in that company who should not die till they had seen a powerful proof of the truth of His speech. His eye looked far down the future. John had died preaching repentance because the kingdom of heaven was near. Jesus came with the good news of its presence among men. It was to be treated with scorn and hatred, but would go forth to conquer. Before some of that audience were dead, the proud city that took off Christ's royal crown and put on one of thorns in contempt, was thrown down and trodden under foot by Roman soldiers. The greatest existing hindrance to the Gospel, to the Kingdom, or to the religion of Jesus, was then removed. Its destruction was an act of awful power, and pictured the Day when Christ shall call the world to His throne of judgment, and burn up the earth. His followers were greatly encouraged to stand up for Jesus by these brave words.

This powerful language was soon to be fortified by testimony from heaven of the highest quality.

Cæsarea Philippi was so called to distinguish it from the other Cæsarea on the Mediterranean Sea. It stood at the foot of a range of lower hills by which Hermon sloped down to the table-land east of Merom. One of the head springs of the Jordan, called Paneas, flowed out from a rocky cliff in the middle of the city, and made a large stream of very clear water. A temple of white marble was

built over the cave from which the stream came. Two miles west was the city of Dan, by another head fountain of the Jordan; and a third stream flowed down from the mountains of Lebanon. But the two last were muddy. Dan was the northern limit of Palestine, and was one hundred and twenty miles north of Jerusalem. The country was higher and cooler than lower Galilee. When the wind was north, a cool breeze blew from the snowy top of Mount Hermon,*

* Note by an able writer :

"Mount Hermon, often referred to in the history (Deut. iii. 8 ; iv. 48 ; Josh. xi. 17 ; xii. 1 ; 1 Chr. v. 23), and celebrated in the song (Ps. xlii. 6 ; lxxxix. 12 ; cxxxiii. 3 ; Cant. iv. 8) of the Israelites, is situated on the north-eastern border of Palestine, beyond Jordan. It stands at the southern end of the Anti-Libanus range, and is described as 'the most conspicuous and beautiful mountain in Palestine or Syria.' The name Hermon signifies 'a lofty, prominent peak.' The Sidonians call it *Sirion*, and the Amorites *Shenar* or *Senir* (Deut. iii. 9), both meaning 'breastplate,' with probable reference to the glittering appearance in the sunlight of its snowy summit. At the present day it is called 'the chief mountain' and 'the snowy mountain.'

"As will be seen by the references given above, this mountain was the great northern landmark of the Israelites. 'Unto Mount Hermon' expressed the extreme limit in that direction of the Land of Promise. 'The reason of this,' says Smith's Bible Dictionary, 'is obvious. From whatever part of Palestine the Israelite turned his eyes northward, Hermon was there, terminating the view. From the plain along the coast, from the mountains of Samaria, from the Jordan valley, from the heights of Moab and Gilead, from the plateau of Bashan, that pale-blue, snow-capped cone forms the one feature on the northern horizon.'

"The altitude of Hermon has never been accurately determined, but it is estimated to be at least 10,000 feet above the sea-level. The peak rises above the surrounding ridges between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, in the form of an obtuse truncated cone. It has three summits of nearly equal height, forming a triangle, and distant from each other about a quarter of a mile. This accounts for the use of the plural in Ps. xlii. 6—which should read 'of the Hermons' instead of 'Hermonites.' From these summits the snow never entirely disappears, lying even in midsummer in the deep ravines which furrow the sides of the cone.

"On one of the summits are found some very ancient ruins, the remains of a small temple surrounded by a rude circular wall. This, it is conjectured, is one of the 'high places' which the Canaanites, and after them the Jews when fallen into idolatry, set up 'upon every high mountain and upon every hill' (Deut. xii. 2 ; 2 Ki. xvii. 10, 11). It is thought not improbable, indeed, that on this mountain was the great sanctuary of the god Baal. In two instances in the Bible it is referred to as Baal-Hermon (Judg. iii. 3 ; 1 Chr. v. 23) ; and

and rivulets of snow-water flowed down the mountains all through the summer. The highest peak was ten miles north of Cæsarea and seven thousand feet above it. Through all the villages and towns of that region Jesus went preaching and healing.

Six whole days, or eight whole days and parts of days, after His sermon about the cross and His coming with angels, Jesus went up one of the southern spurs of Hermon. He took with Him only the three disciples who saw the raising of Jairus' daughter, Peter, James, and John, and there continued all night. The lower ridges of Hermon near Cæsarea run from the mountain south-west, with watercourses between them. From their top, in the clear starlight,

there are evidences that anciently the mountain was encompassed by a circle of temples, all facing toward the summit.

"One of the striking peculiarities of this interesting mountain is the abundant dew which gathers upon its sides. 'One of its hills,' says Porter's *Handbook*, 'is appropriately called Tell *Abu Nedy*, *i.e.*, 'Father of the Dew,' for the clouds seem to cling with peculiar fondness around its wooded top, and the little Wely of Sheikh *Abu Nedy*, which crowns it.' Tristram, in *Land of Israel*, states that he found the dew exceedingly copious, drenching everything. David's 'pilgrim song' in praise of union among brethren has given it a world-wide and perennial celebrity (Ps. cxxxiii. 3). The italicized words in the common version do not, however, belong there, and the royal poet's 'poetic license' in speaking of the 'dew of Hermon' as coming down on 'the mountains of Zion' has sadly perplexed the commentators, who insist on forcing the poet's fancy into the traces of sober fact. Perhaps the most reasonable explanation would be that the 'dew of Hermon,' on account of its singular abundance, is made to stand for copious dew in general--a synonym for peculiar blessing in a land where abundant moisture is a blessing indeed.

"But beyond all poetic and historical interest associated with this mountain is the thought that on its lofty summit, in all probability, occurred that scene of wonder, the transfiguration of our Lord. The event took place in connection with the visit of Jesus to Cæsarea Philippi. Some authorities place the scene on Mount Tabor, but to this there are cogent objections. The most natural inference from the Gospel narrative is that while in 'those parts' (Matt. xvi. 13), or the 'villages' (Mark viii. 27) of Cæsarea Philippi, he retired to the neighboring mountain of Hermon, and was there transfigured. No more appropriate spot could have been chosen than this lofty and retired summit, once the hateful scene of a false worship, for the manifestation of the Redeemer's glory to His astonished disciples."

the whole country seemed like a dark-shaded map. Before them, as they stood facing Cæsarea, were the lights that gleamed from the towns about Lake Merom. Behind them, and almost over them, rose the solemn head of Mount Hermon. In the far east lay the plain of Damascus; and on the west, dimly seen, glimmered the hill-tops of Lebanon. There was no dew, for it was in the hot month of July; and the dry night air was cool and refreshing.

Seven times Jesus prayed alone; three times spending all night in prayer. Once He prayed with three disciples; three times with all; and three times in public before the people. Now the disciples observed that the appearance of His countenance changed; but overcome with weariness they fell asleep, and slept till towards morning. They were not much company for their Master; nor was it the last time they slept while He prayed. They were awakened by the shining of a strong light from Jesus; His face and garments glistened like polished silver. They felt they were in a new world. The light was so excessive at first that they saw no one but Jesus. Soon they distinguished two others, who were talking with Him, and knew them to be Moses and Elijah; and the subject of their conversation was the most important theme then before Heaven—His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. How tender and touching a matter to Jesus! Saints in glory were deeply interested in this great event, which God had revealed to them as soon to come to pass.

It was an occasion to be remembered by these three apostles, who were permitted to see the two most eminent men of God known to Jewish history. Their presence at that time was most honorable to Jesus, and must have greatly cheered His spirit For He now

thinks much of the awful experience before Him when He goes up to the Passover, and talks of it to the apostles, who cannot understand His meaning. He learns by the coming to Him of these representatives of God and truth to past generations, that martyrs or witnesses for righteousness sympathize with Him. They encourage Him to go forward in His course even to the cross. They suffered, but heaven's doors opened to them; and Jesus will have a glorious welcome when He has finished His work. It was like a conference of generals before a battle, when they look over the whole field, and resolve to strike the blow which saves a cause or a country.

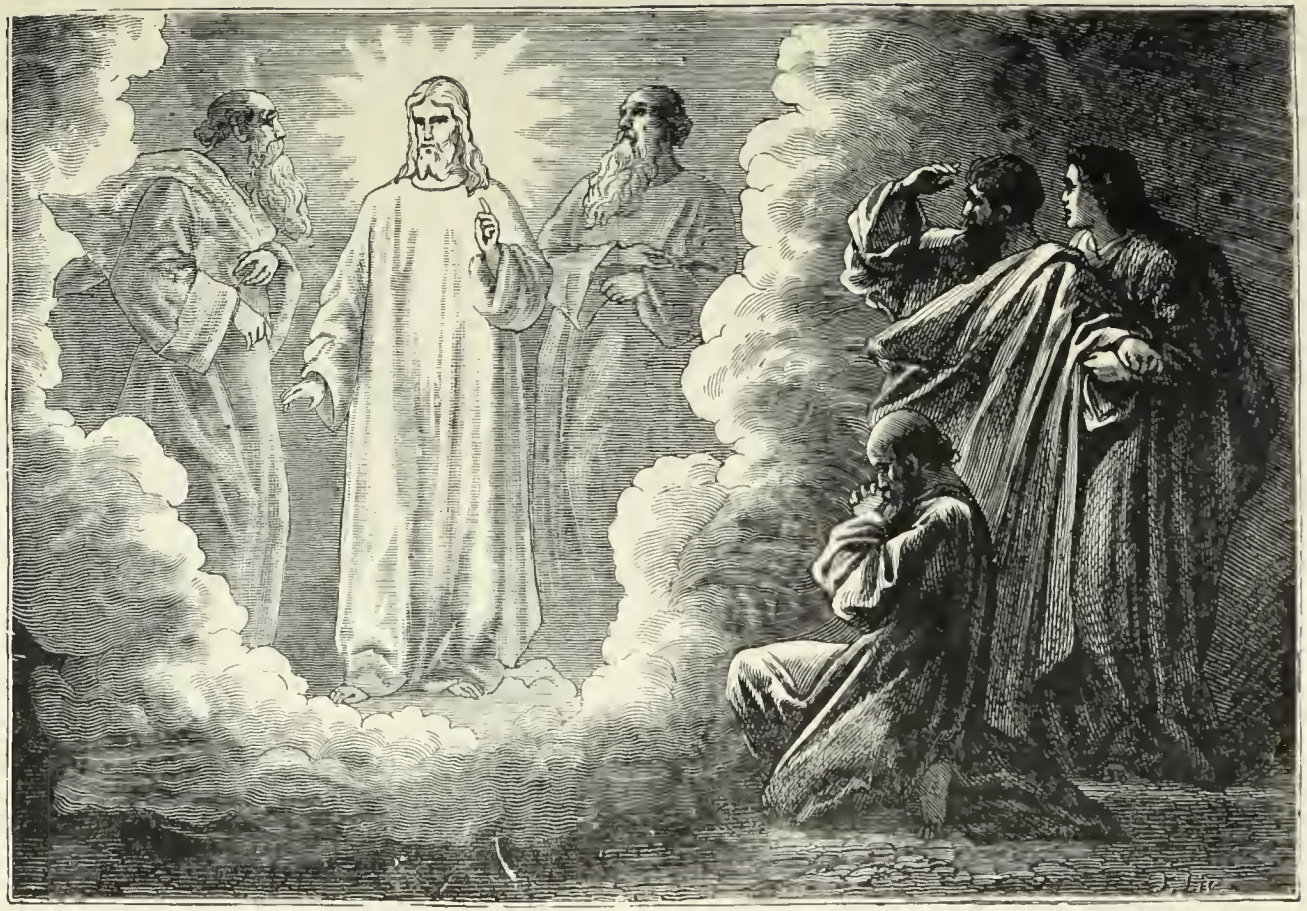
The three brethren were scarcely able to contain their surprise and satisfaction at what they saw, when the visitors* from heaven began to move away from the holy place.

* Note from a writer in *The Examiner*:

Moses was born at the time of the deepest depression of his nation, and the story of his seclusion illustrates the cruelty of the bondage under which they suffered. A series of events, in which human affection and Divine care are beautifully mingled, made him the adopted son of an Egyptian princess, and gave him all the privileges of the Court of the Pharaohs. At the age of forty he first attempted the deliverance of a brother Hebrew, and fear at the discovery of his violence made him an exile for forty years more in the land of Midian. Here he married, and while keeping the flocks of his father-in-law, God appeared to him in Horeb's burning bush, and sent him to deliver his countrymen from the bondage of Egypt.

From this time forward, until his death, the history of the Hebrews is the history of Moses. In all the wants and wanderings, in all the trials and triumphs of the people, Moses stood between them and God. Revelations were made to them through him, and the part he had in declaring the law has given him the title of Law-giver. The ten Commandments and the ceremonial law were the statutes which made Israel a nation, separating them from all others, and developing among them a peculiar style of life and thought. They were prospered in their ways and given success over their enemies in proportion as they were obedient. Their duties to God, to one another, and to the nation, were therein carefully set forth; so that religion, patriotism, and social customs alike had their sources in the laws received, promulgated, and enforced by Moses.

It is sometimes thought that Moses was merely a passive instrument in Jehovah's hands in founding and administering the affairs of the Hebrew theocracy; but this is contrary to



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Peter spoke in his happy frame of mind without really knowing what he said, expressing his delight, and wishing to keep the three together, by offering to build them each a booth, or tent, of the branches of trees, to hide them from the sun that would soon rise. While this was said, a cloud very bright with the glory of God

God's way, as well as to the general tenor of the Scriptural account, and does not accord with the general opinion which has been held of Moses in all ages. The men through whom God has wrought so mightily have been for the most part men of great natural force of character, and this often appears in the wisdom and vigor with which they carry out His instructions. Recall Joseph, Joshua, David, Solomon, Daniel, Isaiah, Elijah, and Paul.

Moses is said in our translation to have been "very meek," but the original word means rather "much enduring," and is supposed to indicate the disinterested and unselfish element of his character. A preference for the cause of the nation, rather than a desire for self-advancement, always characterized his actions. He forgot his own safety to avenge a brother's wrongs; he wished another to take the leadership; when God threatened to destroy the nation and raise up another from him, he prayed they might be forgiven, or that he might be blotted out of God's book. His own sons were not raised to honor, and in his last and long farewell to the people (the Book of Deuteronomy), he pleads for that obedience which alone could bring them success and blessing. "Set your hearts," he cries, "unto all the words which I testify among you this day. . . . For it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life." (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.)

But, for unseemly anger at Meribah, Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land; and when he had recapitulated a large part of their history and their law, showing how disastrous had been the effects of disobedience, and of what value was God's favor, he exhorted them to be of good courage, gave them his blessing, and went up to the mountain-top to die alone. But in denying him a privilege God gave him a death and a burial such as no man ever had before or since, the sublimity and pathos of which invest it with an interest second only to that of the death of Christ.

The phrase, "Elijah (Elias, from the Greek) the Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead," gives us all we know of the origin of this wonderful prophet, who is regarded as "the grandest and most romantic character that Israel ever produced." His people, we know, gradually took on the nomadic habits of the wild desert tribes that dwelt on their borders, and became almost as wild and warlike as they. Of such a people Elijah was a representative man. Clothed in scanty attire of the skins of animals, with hair long and thick, and living much in solitude, his appearances and actions were as unexpected and as bold as those of the Bedouin of his native hills.

Elijah's first appearance (1 Kings xvii.) was to reprove King Ahab for apostasy, and to declare the great drought which was to follow as a punishment. At this time the northern

drew near and enclosed them all. They heard a voice from the cloud, which was very honorable to Jesus; for it was God's testimony: "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." They had not been able to give full assent to everything He told them,—especially about His dying at Jerusalem and rising

kingdom of the ten tribes, over which Ahab reigned, was almost entirely given up to the worship of heathen gods. The king himself had married the daughter of the king of Sidon, and sustained her in introducing the worship of Baal. The grove rites and the worship of Ashteroth had also debauched the people, and the altars of Jehovah were in ruins. After delivering his message, Elijah fled from the wrath of the king, and dwelt first in a mountain solitude, where he was fed by ravens, then in the house of a widow, whose provisions he miraculously increased, and whose son he raised from the dead. At last Elijah appeared before the king's chief officer, who declared that they had sought him in every kingdom of the world.

Then followed the wonderful scene on Mount Carmel, in which the priests of the heathen gods, whose special attribute was supposed to be power, were defeated and overthrown by the single prophet of the God of righteousness, and the people were brought back to their allegiance to Jehovah (1 Kings xviii.). This is one of the most terrible vindications in all Jewish history of the law against idol worship, and the punishment fell upon those who led the people astray rather than on the people themselves. Jezebel was spared only to meet a more terrible fate. For the time being Elijah fled from her and hid himself, desiring to die. But God showed him that His power was in the "still small voice" rather than in the earthquake's fury, and that the 7,000 men who were still true to him were as much a pledge of faithfulness and power and triumph as the slaughter of the prophets of Baal.

Elijah's mission, however, was principally one of denunciation and judgment, and when the king added murder to idolatry, the fiery voice of the prophet again rang in his ears. Upon his children, also, the retribution predicted by the prophet came, for they too forgot God. The men whom Ahaziah sent to make Elijah a prisoner were consumed by fire from heaven, and with this Elijah's conflicts with the Baal-worshippers ceased, though when Jehoram, king of Judah, began to do "as did the house of Ahab," Elijah sent him a message denouncing his sin and predicting his death (2 Chr. xxi. 12–15).

The closing scene of Elijah's life was in keeping with his former history. Nothing can add to the sublimity of the scene as given in 2 Kings ii. chapter.

It was these two men—the one identified with the giving of the Law, and with its early and most faithful administration, and the one by whom it was vindicated in one of the most shameful periods of Jewish history—both of whom had stood before God, and had, like the Saviour, endured a forty days' fast, and had departed from the world so mysteriously, who were granted the privilege of sharing the glories of the transfiguration.

again. Now they must see that these great events were known in heaven; that they took nothing away from the love and respect for Him which the inhabitants of heaven felt; and that God Himself was satisfied with Him. The scene, called His Transfiguration, greatly strengthened the apostles who saw it, in their purpose to follow Jesus to the end of His life, and made them willing to believe His words on every subject

The cloud and the voice quite overcame them, and they fell on their faces; nor did they dare look up till Jesus came and touched them, and bade them rise without fear. Then they looked around and saw neither Moses nor Elijah; "Jesus only" was found with them. It was a bitter disappointment, and they talked long of what they had seen and enjoyed. He charged them strictly not to relate what had passed, till after He was risen from the dead. Of course, they knew nothing about that future resurrection; and they told no one about the Transfiguration of Jesus while He lived. They ventured to hint that the learned Jews said something about the necessity of Elijah's coming before the Messiah. What is the meaning of this statement of the scribes? Is this appearance on the mountain the one they mean? Jesus answered that Elijah, in a sense, had come and restored all things, and had been treated as they chose to treat him. He Himself would suffer the same at their hands. Then they knew that He meant John the Baptist, who had been cruelly beheaded. There was no escape from the dreaded calamity. Jesus must die.

They early went down the mountain to join the disciples, and found them in trouble. There was a poor lunatic boy, who had a dumb spirit, that had possessed him from his childhood, and tor-

mented him by causing him to fall into the fire, or into water. He had been brought by his father to see Jesus, who was gone up the mountain. The disciples, however, were doing miracles, and he asked their help. When they saw the wretched young man, all pale and sore, haggard and wild, they doubted about their ability to cure. When they called on the demon to depart, it would not obey, and they became objects of laughter to some learned persons who were watching, and these questioned them as to their authority and power. Just at this point came Jesus very unexpectedly among them. There was something of the glory of the mountain about Him, and they were amazed by His appearance. They greeted His return very warmly; and the father of the boy knelt before Him and told all his grief, and how the disciples had not been able to cure him. Then Jesus knew what the argument was which the scribes were holding with the apostles. He was exceedingly mortified and hurt by their failure, and ordered the sufferer into His presence. The spirit of evil recognized Jesus, and threw down the boy so that he wallowed on the ground while the froth ran from his mouth. It was an awful misfortune. Jesus made some inquiries, and learned the extent of the trouble. The father prayed: If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us. That "if" was on the wrong side, and Jesus put it where it belonged. "If thou canst believe: all things are possible to him that believeth." He was powerful enough for any cure, and only asked men to trust Him. The poor, anxious man said he believed, and prayed that Jesus would help his unbelief, or make his faith complete. Then as the crowd rose up and pressed on them, He gave orders to the demon to go out, and never return. With an outcry and a struggle it left

the boy, who lay as one dead; but at Jesus' touch he rose, and was delivered to the father, cured. It impressed all who saw it with wonder, and they ascribed the act to God's mighty power.

After He had gone into a house, the disciples privately inquired why they were unable to work the miracle. He replied that they lacked faith. If they only had a small amount of real trust in Him they could do anything. The present example He confessed was a hard case, and nothing could give ability to master such an one, but prayer and fasting, or close intimacy with God. Thus ended His labors and experiences in the region of Cæsarea Philippi.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOME WISE LESSONS BY THE GREAT TEACHER.

JESUS LOVED THE LAKE OF GALILEE.—ITS SCENERY DESCRIBED BY DR. PHELPS.—JESUS REVEALS HIS APPROACHING DEATH.—THIS TROUBLES THE TWELVE.—THEIR WORLDLY AMBITION.—THE COIN IN THE FISH'S MOUTH.—A LITTLE CHILD TEACHES HUMILITY.—CHRIST'S CARE FOR THE INTERESTS OF HIS FRIENDS.—TERRIBLE NATURE OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.—PEACE AND LOVE RECOMMENDED.—FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.—CHURCH DISCIPLINE.—PRAYERS SHALL BE ANSWERED.—PETER'S LESSON.—PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.—FEAST OF TABERNACLES, A.D. 29.—HIS BROTHERS URGE HIM TO GO TO JERUSALEM.—LEAVES GALILEE FINALLY.—HIS DISCIPLES WANT TO BURN A SAMARITAN VILLAGE.—HIS MIRACLES ARE BENEFICENT.—REQUIREMENTS OF DISCIPLESHIP.—HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.

THEY left the vicinity where they had seen so many wonders, and returned toward the beautiful Lake of Galilee, whither the heart of Jesus ever fondly inclined.* On the way, He strove to hide Himself from the populace, by concealing the time when He journeyed, and the direction He took. He had something more to say to the Twelve on the subject now near His inmost thoughts. He had not

* Dr. Phelps thus pleasantly describes and discourses in "Bible Lands":

"Yes, there it is—the Sea of Galilee! O blessed vision—rapturous moment; the long-cherished desire is being fulfilled. I behold a portion of that sea to which I have so often gone in thought and imagination.

"'Blue sea of the hills!—in my spirit I hear
Thy waters, Gennesaret, chime on my ear;
Where the Lowly and Great with the people sat down,
And the spray on the dust of His sandals was thrown.

fully instructed them about the necessity and manner of His dying. He spoke very solemnly concerning it, and foretold His betrayal, murder, and resurrection from the dead. The brethren who heard these sad particulars were greatly troubled; yet they made no inquiries. They grieved over His predictions; but were afraid to oppose the Lord in His discourse, or to inquire more fully respecting what they all so much dreaded and so little comprehended. To hear their great Leader and Friend whom they loved and worshipped say that He was to be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and killed, and raised up again, made them sorry; just as a group of children would be saddened to hear their father say he was to be put in prison, and hung, and then taken out of his bloody grave. It was a sorrowful time for many reasons. That One who had such power should die, that the Messiah of whom the Old Testament made such

"'Beyond are Bethulia's mountains of green,
And the desolate hills of the wild Gadarene;
And I pause on the goat-crags of Tabor to see
The gleam of thy waters, O dark Galilee!'

"With tearful gratitude we look down upon the sweet, tranquil, and sacred lake, and then uncover our heads and shout in joyful exultation. The bank here is somewhat higher than I had supposed, otherwise everything looked much as my fancy had often painted it. The extent, the shape, the hills surrounding—now high and rocky and then depressed to little vales and plains—all things about the lovely sea had a familiar look, I had so studied its topography, and pictured it so often in my mind, and lingered with such intense interest about its hallowed shores. And now I am actually gazing upon it! How near I seem to come to the days of Jesus and the wondrous scenes associated with His ministry here!

"As we stand on the high and sloping bank, about a third of the distance from the southern to the northern extremity of the lake, its surface lies about a thousand feet below us. Its length is perhaps thirteen miles, and its width about half that distance in its broadest and central part. The city of Tiberias is before us close to the water's edge. South of it there is a promontory that excludes a view of the south-western shore. Turning to the north, the eye glances over another promontory, behind which is the little, rich plain of Gennesaret; and then follows the curve of the shore, bending away to the north-east, where the bank is not very high, and where was the central field of our Lord's labors. At the farthest point of

glorious mention should suffer such things, seemed too strange for their belief. They had much to learn of Jesus as a Saviour. They thought of Him as a King, and they even talked with each other about the offices in His coming kingdom, and wondered who would be first. And when one of them asked Him a question on this point, he got but little satisfaction. All their thoughts and words were known by Him; for He knew what was in men.

As they came into Capernaum, two elders from Jerusalem met them, and took Peter aside and asked him if Jesus paid the Temple tax. This Moses appointed for a ransom, in Exodus xxx. 11–16. Every man's soul being of equal value in God's sight, the amount was the same for rich and poor alike—a half shekel. Its object was to support the service in the Temple. Peter supposed that Jesus would observe all the usages of Moses, and answered that He did.

the sea the Jordan flows in through a ravine. Tracing the eastern coast down, at first there is a very gradual slope to the water, and a green, lawn-like spot, that you feel must be the place where Jesus fed the five thousand as they sat in companies on the grass. Farther down, the bank rises and becomes bolder and rocky, till you are sure you discover 'the steep place' where the herd of swine ran violently down into the sea. You distinguish also in those rocky palisades, with the help of a glass, some excavations or tombs, where no doubt dwelt the wild Gadarene whom Jesus healed. . . . Our tents were pitched just north of Tiberias, near the shore of the lake. After a little rest, several of us made a most deeply interesting excursion along the hallowed margin of this lovely sea, and almost to its northern extremity, amidst localities associated at every step with the ministries of our glorious Redeemer. There is a good bridle-path near the water's edge; for the banks, though high and mountainous, with here and there depressions and grassy slopes amid the rocky cliffs, do not pitch abruptly into the lake, but leave a beach of more or less width all round it. This rendered it convenient for its ancient purpose of fisheries, and for landing at any part of it. Smooth pebbles of different colors, and sometimes shells, line the shore. The water is exceedingly transparent, deep, and sweet. We saw an abundance of fishes, some of large size, and a solitary fisherman, angling from a rock, reminding us of some of the scenes and miracles in our Saviour's history. . . . Along this shore our Saviour and His disciples were often found. Here He uttered parables. Here He wrought miracles. Here, perhaps,

and promised to ask Him for it. When he entered the house, to which Jesus had arrived before him, the Teacher anticipated his question, and asked him if kings did not let their children go free and tax strangers. God was His Father and King, and did not require tribute of His only Son. He was also greater than the Temple, and should pay nothing for its service. But He was not willing to give any offence, although He was not under an obligation to pay. Instead of sending him to the treasurer, Judas, for money, He directed Peter to go and cast a hook into the sea, and catch a fish. Nor did He tell him to sell his fish, and use the money for the tax. But to show that He was truly free from taxation, because He was God's dear Son, He said that the first fish that came up would have in its mouth a coin, a silver piece called a stater, with which he should pay both his own and the Teacher's tribute.

the sons of Zebedee were found mending their nets where one of these clear brooks empties itself into the lake. Probably in the mouth of the stream lay the little ships on which Jesus addressed the crowds standing about Him on the land. How often He and His disciples came to this shore or departed from it, crossing the lake! Not far from here He walked upon the water, and they heard His voice, 'It is I; be not afraid.' O how much there is here to remind one of His presence and words! Many of the things He alluded to in the parables are here still. The sower, the wayside, the thorns, the stony places, the tropical heat, the good ground are all here to repeat His solemn truths. The clear, beautiful lake exists as of old in its rugged frame of hills. Tempests sweep down upon it now through the ravines, and suddenly transform its tranquil surface into raging billows, as when He said, 'Peace, be still!' . . . This home of our Lord, at the Sea of Galilee, was fitly chosen for the great and blessed work of His ministry. He came to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to call the heavy laden, and to seek and to save the lost. And no spot furnished better facilities than the populous cities and villages and thronged shores of this beautiful lake. Situated in the midst of the Jordan valley, on the great thoroughfare from Babylon and Damascus into Palestine, its waters were a central point of passing and gathering, by 'the way of the sea,' 'beyond Jordan,' of 'Zebulon and Naphtali.' Depressed to such a depth—six hundred feet below the Mediterranean Sea—its shores have almost a tropical fertility, denied to the bordering uplands, and increased by the beautiful and abundant springs along

What a Being was this, who could not only provision an army of thousands in the wastes of Palestine, but also pay His taxes with money taken from the mouth of a fish! Well might the apostles expect wonders under the rule of such a King!

It was natural that they should want some high place close to His throne and person. It was not honorable to dispute, or be anxious on this point; and Jesus gave them a lesson on greatness in His Kingdom, which they never forgot.

He heard their inquiries about His plans, and His officers, when He should assume the crown, and said nothing except to refer them to their conversation on the way. Then, after a silence in which they seemed to show some shame, He took a little child, drew it into the midst of the ambitious men, and sat down; and first placing it beside Him, and then folding it in His loving arms, He bade these

the western coast. In this respect there is a marked contrast between the Sea of Galilee and that dismal lake into which the Jordan flows and is absorbed. If, as Mr. Stanley well observes, the southern lake is the Sea of Death, the northern is emphatically the Sea of Life—life in its waters and on its banks, and in the time of our Lord a centre of population and traffic. The villages 'sent forth their fishermen by hundreds over the lake; and when we add the crowd of ship-builders, the many boats of traffic, pleasure, and passage, we see that the whole basin must have been a focus of life and energy; the surface of the lake constantly dotted with the white sails of vessels flying before the mountain gusts, as the beach sparkled with the houses and palaces, the synagogues, and the temples of the Jewish or Roman inhabitants.' It was no secluded spot that our Saviour sought for His home—no hermit-life that He lived. Nowhere except in Jerusalem could He have found such a sphere for His labors. Readily from this centre 'His fame went throughout all Syria;' vast multitudes were attracted by His teaching and miracles; 'from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan,' and 'ran through the whole region round about,' bringing the diseased in beds, 'where they heard He was; and whithersoever He entered into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in streets, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of His garment.' Such was the home of Christ with its surroundings; its scenes and 'images which could occur nowhere else in Palestine but on this one spot, and which from that one spot have now passed into the religious language of the

proud, aspiring apostles look at the humble, affectionate child, and see an example of true greatness in His sight. He then earnestly spoke, and said that unless they were turned away from their pride and desire to be first, they could not have any place in His service. They must have the lowliness and confiding trust in Him which they saw in that child. They must put away their lofty hopes of being rich and powerful, and be as children in freedom from high notions. To be a great Christian one must be small in his own eyes, and try to do others the most good. They must not despise the lowest and smallest, but receive them in His name, and believe that they were then doing Him honor.

At this point, John told Jesus that He had seen one casting out devils in His name, and added that he had forbidden him to do so, because he did not belong to our party. Jesus said, that John was

civilized world.' O what an undying interest clusters around the Sea of Galilee! As we retrace our steps, I paused at Magdala for a refreshing bath in the clear waters of the lake . . . After the fatigue and heat of the day it was exceedingly grateful to sit down by our tents, or walk by the pebbly margin of the sea. The shadows of the high bank were thrown over us; the golden sunlight was fading from the eastern hills; and trees and rocks along the shore were mirrored in the calm, crystal waters. The crescent moon was hid behind the western bank, but might have been seen from its top, lingering over Mount Tabor. Soon the stars came out and flashed over the sea, the same as when the Holy Redeemer wandered by this shore, or sailed over the surface of the deep. It was by this lake that He said to the weary 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' In our tents we come to Him, commit ourselves to His loving protection, and sleep by the Sea of Galilee where He so often slept. . . . The first sound in the morning was the loud roaring of the billows and breakers on the shore. A sudden change had come over the lake. So tranquil and serene at evening, now its whole surface was broken up into foam-crested waves. How vividly did this remind me of a thrilling scene in our Lord's experience when, as He was passing over in a boat with His disciples, a sudden tempest came down upon the sea—the wind rushing through some of the ravines—and tossed it into boisterous billows, which He, when awakened, calmed by the word of His power. . . .

"The next morning, about seven o'clock, we left Tiberias for Nazareth. Up the long

wrong, because any man who used His name for a good work, would not be likely to speak evil of Him. The humblest service done to them in His name, because they were Christ's followers, would certainly be rewarded, even if it was only the giving a cup of cold water. So closely was He bound up with them, that even though they were not to look for high places, they were very dear to His heart. He who blessed them should be blessed; but he who did them an injury, because they were humble and lowly, would fare better to have a millstone hanged around his neck, and to be cast into the sea, and be innocent of such an act.

If Christians suffer, the world also suffers, and especially the man who makes them suffer. He has a woe on his head worse than drowning. For there is an awful punishment for bad men in another world—worse than losing the eye, or the hand, or the foot. It is better to escape hell-fire, and enter into everlasting life in heaven, even if one has to lose any organ of the body or his natural life. It is a perpetual torment which the lost experience, and an endless joy which the saved receive.

He appealed to them to have peace among themselves; and this would preserve them and make their society happy, as salt keeps food and gives it a pleasant taste.

Humble, childlike believers they must not despise, for He has their interests in charge, the Infinite Father, who sends angels to

slope we filed away, and soon reached the top of the high western bank. Here we paused and turned about for a last look upon the Sea of Galilee, nearly all of which, with its shores, was visible. With my glass I surveyed each spot again with the deepest interest. Delightful view! Farewell, lovely Lake of Gennesaret! Thy picture, with its wonderful associations, remains in its perfection, and can never fade! No, I can never forget the Sea of Galilee!"

lead and succor them. For as Jesus has come to seek and save them, when they are found, He loves and rejoices over them as a shepherd over a sheep taken from wanderings in the woods; and God will not let them perish. As Christians are but men, they may do wrong; but as they are brothers they must not hate and forsake the wrong-doer. Rather should he who is offended call on the offender, and tell him privately his fault. If, after a plain talk alone, there is no satisfaction received, let the one who feels himself wronged take one or two other brethren, and visit the sinful one and try to have their differences reconciled. If the stubborn one still refuses to make amends for his wrong-doing, then let the case be presented to the church or whole company of believers. If this avails nothing, and the sinner persists in his sinful way, then let him be cast forth as unworthy a place in the church. So tenderly and faithfully must Christians deal with one another's faults. And when this course is ended, God will approve the action of the church. If careful, frank dealing ends in restoring confidence and love, the blessing of God follows; otherwise the bad man is cursed from heaven.

He made a great promise to the church—that agreement in prayer even by two should prevail with God. He also said that a meeting of two or three Christians for prayer and praise, should be graced by His presence; and on this account God would hear and bless them. These tremendous pledges of aid were not fully understood till long after; if indeed they were ever truly taken in and comprehended.

The law of forgiveness was not clear in Peter's mind, and he took the best course to have it explained—he came to Jesus, and

asked Him if he was to forgive a brother seven times. That seemed enough to satisfy reasonable demands; but Jesus said, no, he must forgive him seventy times seven, or always have a forgiving spirit. He illustrated His meaning by a story. It is called the parable of The Unmerciful Servant. There was a King who had a number of servants entrusted with various duties, and especially with the use of money. When the day came for settling with these officers, one of them was found to be in debt ten thousand talents—an immense sum—and he had nothing with which to pay this vast amount of money. The man was ordered to be sold, with his wife and children, into slavery; all their property was to be taken and sold; and out of the proceeds the debt was to be paid, or partly cancelled. This was a terrible decree, and the debtor could only fall on his knees, and with solemn and earnest prayers, accompanied by promises of payment, ask for mercy. The King was merciful, and had patience, and let him try to fulfil his promise. The man thus kindly treated went out of the palace, and in the street met a brother officer who was in the King's service, who owed him a few pennies—a very trifling sum. He instantly caught the man by the throat, and demanded payment. It was a brutal, bullying act, and frightened the poor man, who went down on his knees and begged for time, promising full payment, just as his assailant had done with the King. But he was not like the King; for he had the poor fellow thrown into prison, there to stay till the debt was paid. When this report got abroad, and the King heard of it, everybody was sorry and indignant, and he who had been so cruel was called up before the King, who reminded him how he had been forgiven, rebuked his cruelty, and ordered him to be treated just as he had treated his

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.

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fellow-servant; only the tormentors were to punish him with special tortures. "So," said the Teacher, "shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." This was enough to convince Peter that seventy times seven was none too large a number to use in describing how often he must forgive an offending fellow Christian. Since God has forgiven us sins innumerable, and greater than we can think rightly of, we must surely be willing to forgive the offences which are so few and small.

Jesus now prepares to quit Galilee for a short time. It was the year of our Lord 29. The Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem began October 19. Two weeks before this, the rulers of the synagogue sent heralds throughout Capernaum, crying: "Hear ye; prepare within these seven days to go up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles, according to the law; the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. And ye shall go forth unto the Mount (Olives) and fetch olive-branches, and pine, and myrtle, and palm, and branches of thick trees to make booths, as it is written." The same proclamation was made in all the towns. This feast was not observed for the thousand years between Joshua and Nehemiah; but this last great restorer had also revived this custom, which the Jews afterwards preserved.

His brothers now told Jesus that it was time for Him to get away from Galilee, where only the poor and humble lived, and go up to the capital, that He might become better known. They blamed His course, because they did not yet believe on Him as He wished. His reply was to the effect, that He and they had nothing in common.

They belonged to different parties entirely. They had no mission from God, while His times and seasons were in God's hands. They could go and come as they chose. No one hated them; but He was an object of hatred because He preached against the sins of the world. It was necessary for Him to beware of the malice of His enemies, and to hear the voice of God calling Him to enter into danger, before He went. They could go up with the crowds to Jerusalem; He should not yet go, but wait for the right time. He continued where He was, till the mighty throng had passed on; and then, as the hour drew near when He was to die and go back to His Father in Heaven, He firmly set about the preparations for His journey. It was to be a quiet, almost secret progress, that He might not stir up too much opposition, and bring on His death too suddenly, before His work was done. As many were to accompany Him, He sent messengers forward to prepare for their entertainment in different villages. He was cordially received till the party came to a Samaritan village, whose inhabitants saw that they were going as worshippers to Jerusalem. The Samaritans did not have anything to do with that Temple, and these villagers thought to show their bitter feeling, by shutting their doors against these Jews. James and John were very angry at such an insult, and asked Jesus to allow them to command fire to come down and burn the place, "even as Elijah did." He did not share their wrath, but told them they did not realize what kind of a spirit they were showing. His mission was not to destroy men's lives, but to save. If people did not treat Him well, He was not going to punish them. That must be left entirely to God. The disciples must also use their power in prayer and miraculous gifts to do men good, that they might save their souls. They passed on to

another village, and were hospitably received. This was much wiser than to have trouble with these people, or to punish them. Thus He continually taught the wisest lessons by His example and precept. His preaching and labors attracted men, who, in their zeal and admiration, said they would follow Him anywhere. He always informed them plainly what they must expect, if they followed Him. One scribe, a learned Pharisee, offered his life to Jesus; and He answered, as if to say: You have had a good home and all its comforts; I am worse off than the beasts and birds that have resting-places, permanent homes, for I have not a roof, nor a pillow, and you had better consider whether you are able to leave your pleasant abode to share my poverty and wanderings. If you are able to exercise such self-denial, welcome to my band of disciples.

Another scholar, to whom He gave the invitation to follow Him, said He must first go and bury his father. Jesus was on His journey, and answered that this would not do. The friends at home, who are dead in their sins, must bury the body; "but go thou and preach."

Another said he would attend Him; only he must first go home, and say farewell to his relatives. This too was not permitted. When a man is ploughing, he must not look behind, but ever forward, if he would keep his furrows straight and his team properly in hand. To follow Jesus meant to give up all sad farewells to kindred, and lay the whole heart and soul and body and fortune on the altar of sacrifice.

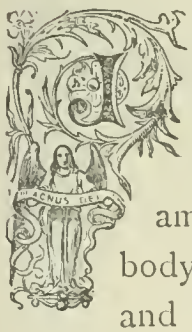
Jesus never abated an atom from these requirements considered in their principle. As He gave up Himself wholly for men, they must entirely yield themselves to Him. Full trust in Him as the Saviour, and complete submission to Him as Lord, are necessary on

the part of all who share the eternal salvation. In Jesus' time, and at other periods, this whole-hearted surrender brought many sore privations, and actual persecutions. But in our age, one may be a thorough Christian without losing home and friends, property and life. But self-will, and the sin that is nearest and sweetest, must fall, and Jesus must be the dearest object of love, and the King of the soul

CHAPTER XXIV.

ATTEMPTS AGAINST THE LIBERTY OF JESUS.

JESUS AT JERUSALEM.—RESOLUTION TO EXCOMMUNICATE ALL WHO CONFESSED HIM TO BE CHRIST.—PILATE'S TROUBLES WITH THE JEWS LEAD TO BLOODSHED.—JESUS CREATES EXCITEMENT.—HOT DISCUSSIONS.—WILFUL BLINDNESS OF HIS ENEMIES.—DR. MARCH DESCRIBES THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.—CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE WATER OF LIFE.—SAVED FROM VIOLENCE BY HIS OWN ELOQUENCE.—SANHEDRIM IN A RAGE.—NICODEMUS MAKES A POINT OF LAW.—JESUS SLEEPS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.—THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.—HER ACCUSERS ROUTED.—JESUS BIDS HER GO AND SIN NO MORE.—HE CALLS HIMSELF THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.—FIGHTS THE PHARISEES HAND TO HAND.—CALLS HIS OPPONENTS THE DEVIL'S CHILDREN.—CHALLENGES THEM TO CONVICT HIM OF SIN.—CLAIMS TO BE OLDER THAN ABRAHAM.—ESCAPES FROM HIS BLOODTHIRSTY ENEMIES.



JESUS arrived about the middle of the Feast, and found Himself a centre of interest and a subject of conversation. He was again, after an absence of a year and a half, among His bitter haters. The Galileans had made everybody acquainted with His miracles and preaching among them; and the Sanhedrim had circulated false reports and passed laws against Him. They ordered that anybody confessing Him to be the Christ, should be excommunicated, or put out of the Jewish church. No one dared to say much about Him for fear of being made an outcast by the Jews.

The rulers had another source of trouble that often caused bloodshed. Pilate was a heathen, and a cruel governor. He unwisely did many things to enrage the people and provoke them to resist his soldiers. At this time he was building an aqueduct to bring water into Jerusalem from a famous fountain twenty-five miles distant. It was for the general good, and he ordered the priests to pay the workmen from the sacred money in the Temple. This seemed sacrilege, or outrage on their religion; and the people gathered in a vast mob, and attacked the laborers and tried to stop the work. But Pilate's soldiers scattered them after killing many; and the priests were obliged to furnish money from the sacred chests.

Now Jesus comes to disturb them again. He and His apostles appear in the Temple, and teach as fearlessly as if all were quiet and friendly. They saw Him from their Council Chamber, as He sat in the court, and knew that He whom they had been steadily persecuting, and who had done them so much harm, by pointing out their sins and errors, had really come to meet them face to face. They listened to His discourses, and admired their freshness and power. But they scornfully asked who His teachers were, and where He had been taught. He pointed to His Father in Heaven as the Author of His teaching. He charged them with not keeping Moses' law, which they professed to revere. If they would only obey His word, they would learn that it sprung from God.

He charged them with being unwilling to test fairly His claims, and with desiring, instead, to kill and get Him out of the way. Then the people said He had a devil, and was insane, and asked, "Who goeth about to kill Thee?" They could not understand His meaning as yet, for they had not learned of the murderous plots of the rulers.

JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST.

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He then defended His good works on the Sabbath; and requested them to judge Him not from appearance, but from such a consideration of His word and works as would result in righteous judgment or fair decision. By this time, citizens of Jerusalem, who knew the angry feelings of their rulers, began to inquire why the chief men allow Him, whom they seek to kill, to speak so boldly without opposition. "Do they know," said these men, "that He is the very Christ?" We, they argued, have an idea that Christ will come in some mysterious way, so that no one can tell where He comes from. But we are acquainted with this man's birthplace and parentage. Jesus caught up their words and proclaimed that He was sent of God. They might know of His earthly origin; He announces His heavenly origin and mission. This stirred them up to seize Him as one possessed, or as a guilty impostor; but no one led the attack. That hour was yet to come. Some believed, and asked very pertinently: "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than those which this One hath done?" Still all was boiling in confusion, and the murmurs of the people reached the rulers, who sent officers to take Him prisoner. He saw them in the crowd, and addressed them solemnly, assuring them that some time they would wish to see Him, but would not be able, because He would be with God. They were so stupid that some of them thought He meant that He would go away into a heathen country and preach to the Gentiles. They were puzzled over His sayings, because they wilfully misunderstood them. None are so blind as those who will not see; and men easily believe what they wish to. The arrest of Jesus was not made by the officers, and from day to day He continued His great work among the

people, and none dared molest Him. And here let another* pen describe the events of the

LAST NIGHT OF THE FEAST.

"Next to the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles was the most memorable and impressive of all the great national solemnities kept by the Hebrew people. For seven successive days Jerusalem was crowded by thousands of the faithful in Israel, gathered from all parts of Judea and from distant provinces of the Roman empire. The multitude seemed more immense, because the resident population of the city, as well as the strangers, turned out of their dwellings and spent the week in the open air. They lived in booths or tabernacles of green boughs built upon the housetops, in the streets and public squares, in the courts of the Temple and of private houses, and all up and down the valleys and hill-sides beyond the walls of the city. The whole of Mount Zion, with its compact array of flat roofs and stone battlements, was so thickly shaded with green boughs as to seem in the distance like a forest of palm and of pine, of olive and of myrtle. Seven days were consecrated with offerings and libations, with feast and song, with the grand choral symphonies of the Temple music, and the evenings were given to illuminations and torchlight dances. The whole week was one long pastime of exhilarating and, in the end, of exhausting joy. The time was autumn. The fruits of the earth had ripened and the harvest had been gathered in from all the fields. The whole nation was represented in the thanksgiving and festivities with which the capital celebrated the close of the year.

* Dr. March: "Night Scenes of the Bible."

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The Star in the East

"The night following the seventh day of the feast was the time when the interest of the great festival attained a pitch of the most wild and excited enthusiasm. Through the whole of that night four huge golden candelabras, each sustaining four vast basins of oil, were kept burning in the principal court of the Temple. The flame of these sixteen golden lamps illuminated the whole city. In the midst of the crowded court devout men danced with lighted torches in their hands, tossing them high in the air and catching them as they came down, at the same time shouting in unison with each other and singing psalms of praise. A vast orchestra of Levites was ranged up and down the fifteen stone steps of the Temple, and they accompanied the dancing and the songs with harps, cymbals, psalteries, and all sorts of musical instruments. The vast mass of the people in front of the Temple took up the chorus, at the same time waving branches of palm and of myrtle, and the swell of song rolled over all the housetops, and through all the streets, and overpast the walls of the city, and it was taken up in the tents on the hill-sides, until thousands upon thousands of voices joined in the strain, which was called the great Hosanna: 'Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever.' The singing and dancing and the instrumental music were kept up all night.

"When the first streak of dawn appeared shooting up the eastern sky, over the ridge of Olivet, the priests sounded with silver trumpets three times, long and loud; and the answering shouts of the people welcomed the Great Hosanna day. A procession of priests started immediately to bring water from the fountain of Siloam, which flowed at the foot of Mount Moriah, outside of the walls. When the procession returned, the brief twilight had grown

to the full day. Their appearance was greeted with a blast of silver trumpets. They ascended the steps of the Temple, bearing the golden beaker full of water in their hands, chanting the song of Degrees as they went slowly up, keeping time with their steps: 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.' Then, in the presence of all the people, they poured out the consecrated water in commemoration of the fountain that flowed from the rock for the tribes in the wilderness; and again they sung, and the people took up the chorus with thundering voices: 'The Lord Jehovah is my strength and song; therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.'

"On this occasion, the music and the shouting, the glare of lamps and torches, the waving of palms, and the blast of trumpets; the festive garlands and the excitement of the multitude, produced so deep an impression upon all present, that the Jewish people were accustomed to say: 'He who has never seen the rejoicing at the pouring out of the water of Siloam, has never seen rejoicing in his life. . . . .

"At this joyous climax in the great national festivity, when the people had exhausted themselves with singing and shouting all night; and the morning found them weary, hungry, and thirsty, Jesus stood forth and cried, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink!' The long holiday was just closing. The supply of water had been greatly reduced by the unusual multitude gathered in the city. Joy itself had at last become wearisome. There was nothing more to excite or to interest the multitude, that had been standing and walking, and shouting and singing, all night. The reaction of faintness and of exhaustion was beginning to overpower the people.

Just then, the clear, calm voice of Jesus is heard in all the crowded court of the Temple, speaking as never man spake; ringing out upon the fresh air of the morning like the blast of the silver trumpets; and saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water which I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.' Never did the Divine Teacher Himself preach His own Gospel in more vivid and expressive terms. Never did He make a more touching appeal to the sense of need; to the deep feeling of want in the human soul. The time, the place, all the attendant circumstances, conspired to give meaning and power to the words spoken. The people knew the voice, and they understood the figurative dress in which Jesus expressed the offer of salvation. To them the water of Siloam was the sign of the rock smitten by Moses in the wilderness, and the rock of Moses was the sign of their own Messiah. They felt the strange power, the sacred fascination of the voice which rang out clear and loud on that memorable morning in the crowded court of the Temple. And some were ready to say, with the woman of Samaria, 'Give me of this water that I thirst not.'"

At the end of this sermon, the hearers were divided in their opinions about the Preacher; some said He was the Prophet foretold; some that He was the Christ; and some were in doubt, because the Scriptures predicted that the Christ should be of David's posterity, and from Bethlehem; but Jesus they thought came from Galilee. They did not stop to learn where He was born, and in what line, but instantly, on hearsay, suspected Him of not being what He

seemed and claimed. Indeed, there were those who would have seized and captured Him; but something kept them from this violence.

When the Temple police were brought before the Sanhedrim to report on the case, there was great surprise shown because they had no prisoner. They could only answer, "Never man spake like this man." This made the leaders of the Council very angry, and they said bitterly, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." It was a scornful reply, and showed how deep their malice was. You, poor ignorant people, who have not acquaintance with the law, are deceived by this man. Why do you not wait and see whether the great men, learned in the law, receive this Jesus as the Christ? There is a curse falling on your empty heads. How contemptuous and spiteful were these senators! They had no fairness, no love of truth, no true piety, and no real desire for the good of the people. They were misled by passion, and misguided by selfishness. Jesus said they were under the power of the devil—the Satan who had tried to master Him, and failed. There was one man among the Sanhedrim who had visited Jesus, and honestly tried to find out whether He was actually the Son of God. His visit was a night visit, and greatly affected him. This man, Nicodemus, now stood up to make a point of law. He asked, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" It was a pertinent question, and showed the justness and courage of this senator. But the only effect it produced was to bring out the settled hate of the body, and a taunting question and a falsehood. "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look; for

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

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out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Then the assembly broke up in confusion; because there was no desire to do justice, or to investigate fairly Jesus' right to be heard in the character He assumed. They separated to their homes, for these men had splendid houses, and all that heart could wish; and these things they thought would be lost to them if they let Jesus live. If the people followed Him, the Sanhedrim, priests, elders, and all public officers, were afraid they would be put out of their places. And so they pursued Him with murderous purpose. Jesus had no home, no house to shelter His weary frame, no pillow for His head; and He went out to the Mount of Olives, and laid Himself down under the old trees and slept. He wanted nobody's palace, or riches, or honors. It cut Him to the heart to be treated unkindly by the rulers, for He would save them as well as publicans and sinners. He knew all their ugly feelings and cruel desires; but He had God's work to do, and He could not shrink from His calling.

Accordingly He early crossed the brook Kidron, and made His way into the Temple. There the crowds gathered, and He sat and taught them God's law, and truths of vital importance to their well-being. Meanwhile, the enemy found a case which they thought would bring Him into conflict with Moses, or with His whole history. He had not been harsh, but forgiving, and had pleaded always for mercy towards the erring and sinful. A bad, wicked woman was brought to Him, and the crime stated with positive proofs of her guilt. Now, said the grave scribes and Pharisees, Moses' law commands that she be stoned to death. They were on their way to the place of stoning, when they found Jesus preaching. What do you say ought to be done to this vile creature? Jesus at once, from

modesty and sorrow, dropped His head, and wrote something on the ground. He would not condemn the woman then and there. He would even write her accusation in the sand. But they kept pressing Him harder and harder for a decision. Ah! they thought they had caught Him now; and so became eager to see His defeat. Perhaps they could get something out of Him that would be an excuse for taking Him to the place of execution that morning, along with this woman, and for stoning Him to death also. But He rose up and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Then He stooped again and wrote as before. Not another word was said. This terrible speech awoke conscience, and it began to murmur in every one's ear, till they were all so confused and overcome by a sense of sin, that they all with downcast looks glided away, and left the woman standing where she had been placed. Jesus, however, did not go, for He had no sins to accuse Him. The enemies were dispersed like leaves before a blast. Then Jesus arose and looked around, and saw only the woman. Tenderly He asked what had become of her accusers, and whether any had condemned her? She respectfully replied: "No man, Lord." Then He felt free to say, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." She had been dreadfully punished, had been pushed to the edge of destruction, and heard the roar of its waves beneath. A strong, gentle hand has rescued her, and a kind but solemn voice bids her never repeat the act which had so nearly ruined her forever. It was a grand victory for Jesus, a reproof to the cruel hypocrites, and a lesson for life to the erring daughter of sin. Jesus honored the law and Himself. He rebuked sin, not only in that poor, shrinking, trembling woman, but also in those bearded, pretentious men. How

the people shouted as the last bloodthirsty accuser left the place in shame. How they admired the Lord, when He saved the woman from death and from her sin. Never again did she venture to disobey the law of God and man, but lived penitent and pure to the end. New glories were constantly flashing forth from Jesus as He drew aside the veil, and let His true nature appear.

In a sermon, soon after, He termed Himself the Light of the World. His followers should not stumble along like men in a dark path, but should walk fearlessly in the beams of a living light. This made the Pharisees angry. They said He was only a boaster. But He met their charge by saying that He had two witnesses, Himself and His Father. They pretended not to know who His Father was. He said it was not strange, then, that they were ignorant of Him, since they knew not His Father; for if they had known One they would have known the Other. Thus He fought them hand to hand, and kept advancing higher and higher claims for Himself.

He thrust His sword into their very hearts, when He spoke of their sins, which should separate them from Him. He made their salvation from death in sin to depend on their belief in Him; and boldly professed to speak only what the Father gave Him to say. The time would come when they should see that He was God's messenger. There was the closest friendship between Him and the Father. Whatever He did was always pleasing to God. Many believed His preaching; and yet they were extremely ignorant, so that He had to fight for the truth inch by inch, like a soldier in the centre of fierce assailants. His sword was kept whirling round and round, except as He now and then plunged it through some questioner, or clove the head of an opponent and disputer. He called them the

devil's children, because they were seeking to kill Him, and hated the truth. They loved a lie, and thirsted for innocent blood, and thus showed the nature of Satan, who was a murderer and liar from the beginning.

Then He challenged them to convict Him of sin. They could not bring anything that would raise in His conscience a tremor, or cast on His heart a shadow. Because He was sinless He was true; and if they were God's children they would receive Him.

They answered that He was a Samaritan, and had a devil. But He denied this, and claimed that He honored God, and that His sayings gave immortality to men who believed. This only maddened them the more; but He drove the sword deeper, and said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day. This they resented. He was not yet fifty years old and professed to have seen Abraham! And Jesus exhausted their patience by saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you; before Abraham was, I am." Nobody but a Jew can realize the nature of such language. Instead of calmly considering the matter, to learn the truth of His words, they took for granted their falseness and blasphemy, and seized "stones to cast at Him." Retiring behind the treasure boxes, and concealed by His friends in the audience, for God was with Him, He got away from the Temple into a place of safety. He could hope for only a short respite from the malicious Jews; but this was needful for the large amount of work He had to do, before He was lifted up on the cross.

CHAPTER XXV.

INTERESTING LABORS.

COMMISSIONS SEVENTY PREACHERS.—CLOTHES THEM WITH DIVINE AUTHORITY.—GREAT SUCCESS REPORTED ON THEIR RETURN.—JESUS REJOICES.—TO BE A CHRISTIAN THE GREATEST PRIVILEGE.—TRUTH REVEALED TO BABES.—CONVERSATION WITH A LAWYER ABOUT THE ETERNAL LIFE.—LAWYER'S CHARACTER.—THE STORY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN TOLD BY ANOTHER.—RELATIONS OF THE JEWS TO THE SAMARITANS.—DANGEROUS ROAD.—TRAVELLER AND ROBBERS.—PRIEST, LEVITE, SAMARITAN, AND THEIR CONDUCT.—"WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?" ANSWERED.—WAY TO ETERNAL LIFE.—JESUS AT BETHANY, NEAR JERUSALEM.—LAZARUS, MARTHA, AND MARY RECEIVE HIM INTO THEIR HOUSE.—THE DIFFERENT MANNER OF THE SISTERS.—MARTHA REPROVED.—MARY COMMENDED.—THE GOOD PART, AND THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

JESUS now commissions seventy of His disciples to go out as reapers into the harvest of souls. He instructs them as He did the first company He sent forth to preach and heal. He speaks of woes to fall on cities who reject their gracious messages and wonders. And He prepares them to go forward in confidence, because they are sent in His stead, on the very authority of God.

When they came back, two by two, as they had gone, they were joyful because evil spirits went forth from their victims at their commands spoken in the name of the Lord. He, too, is made happy,

and tells them that He saw Satan rushing down to swift destruction like the lightning, and promises them power to overcome all enemies of the truth. The Saviour bade them be more glad that their names were written in heaven, than that they were able to cast out devils. He inwardly thanked God that the Gospel which learned men did not receive, was fully and joyfully accepted by His humble followers who had a childlike spirit. Men were altogether dependent on God for all true knowledge of the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. And He told the disciples that they were happy in having seen and heard these great things, which men of other ages, even prophets and kings, had desired in vain to see and hear.

* "One day a lawyer, who was passing by when Jesus was teaching, stopped to hear what He had to say. The conversation was, as usual, about the eternal life, the perfect happiness.

"'But how can one have this eternal life?' cried out the lawyer, loudly. 'How can one get this perfect happiness? It is all very well to talk about the perfect happiness, but how can one obtain it?—that is the question.'

"Jesus turned round to him, and answered, 'Why, you ought to know; it is your business to understand the Law of Moses and the Scriptures, where the Law is written. You have been studying them all your life, and they talk of little else. What do the Law and the Scriptures say about it?'

"'O,' replied the man, 'the Law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with thy strength, and with all thy mind."'

"'Does it say nothing more?'

* "Stories from the Lips of the Teacher."

"'Yes; it says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."'

"'Very well,' returned Jesus, 'you have answered your own question. Do this,—love your neighbor as you love yourself, and the eternal blessedness shall be yours.'

"'Nay,' cried the man, wishing to show his wit, and to puzzle the Great Teacher, 'that is not so simple as you seem to think it.'

"This lawyer was one of those who study the Bible, not to find out what it means, but to make it mean what they like. He knew so much about it that he did not know anything; he had read it till its truth was all read away, because he did not read it with his heart, because he used it to practise his wit on. He could dispute about the Scriptures all day long; he could twist and turn it in all directions; he could make the easiest sentences so dark that you could not see any sense in them, and could find so many meanings in common words that at last they had no meaning whatever. There was a good chance for him to show how sharp and knowing he was.

"'It is not so simple,' said he, 'as you seem to think. I am to love my neighbor as myself. Good: but what do you understand by the word neighbor? Who is my neighbor? Is it the man who lives next door? or across the way? or in the square hard by? Is it my rich friend, who gives the dinner-parties and has the elegant suppers? Is it my first or second cousin? or is it the member of the same tribe, my countryman, or my clansman? You may mean by neighbor somebody I never saw, or somebody I see every day; somebody I like, or somebody I don't like; it makes a great deal of difference whether you mean one or the other.'

"He spoke all this in a loud voice, and looked about him with an expression of triumph, as if he would say, 'What do you think of

that now? Was not that smart? Was not that a good hit? See how easy it is to stop the mouth of this wise man.'

"Jesus took no notice of the man's tone or look, but quietly replied, 'Perhaps I can best answer your question by telling you a story.'

"And this is the story which Jesus told him.

"A man was once travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. He went that way because, being a good Jew, he wished to avoid passing through Samaria; but it was a dangerous journey. Jericho was about seventeen miles from Jerusalem, towards the north-east. It was a very old city, and before the Israelites came from Egypt into the Holy Land, it was the richest and strongest of thirty cities, each of which had a king of its own. This was the city, you will remember, whose walls, according to the ancient Bible story, fell down at the blowing of Joshua's trumpets. Joshua destroyed the city, but it was rebuilt, and in the days of Jesus was very handsome, with grand fortifications and noble palaces. Great numbers of priests lived there, some say several thousand. Their duties were in Jerusalem, but Jericho was their home. It was a splendid city; but its name was 'Vapor,' and it has passed away like a cloud, so completely that the place where it rested can hardly be recognized.

"The road between Jerusalem and Jericho was exceedingly wild. Soon after leaving the beautiful valley, with its dense groves and sparkling watercourses, in the midst of which the latter city stood, the traveller entered on a rugged, mountainous region. The verdure by degrees disappeared, until at length not a bush, not so much as a blade of grass, could be seen. The surface of the ground was covered with loose stones, sometimes thrusting sharp edges out of

the soil, and sometimes broken into small pieces, and looking as if it had been burned by volcanic fires. The road ran along the edge of steep precipices and yawning chasms, or ran beneath them, and was overhung by crags, fierce and threatening. The aspect of the whole region was very savage and desolate. The mountains seemed to have been started from their foundations and torn in pieces by some frightful convulsion which rent them from their base, and left them to be scathed and cracked by the terrific heat of the sun.

"The journey was an exceedingly slow and painful one. The motion of the horse in clambering up and down the steep ragged places was tiresome to the last degree. Every step of the poor beast, as he went jerking and jolting along over the sharp stones, racked the whole body and lamed every limb. The heat of the sun, beating directly down, or reflected from the walls of rock, was intense, and there was hardly a resting-place the whole dismal distance. Added to all this discomfort was the terror of robbers, who lurked in the caverns and gorges of the mountains, leaped out like wild beasts on the unarmed or unwary traveller, pillaged him, beat him, killed him perhaps, and in a few minutes were safe from pursuit among the crags. One part of the road was so famous for these deeds of plunder and blood, that it was called 'Adummim,' the bloody way.

"About half way between Jerusalem and Jericho the valley widened. Here there was a natural fountain gushing by the roadside, a rude stone basin that made a trough for watering horses, and an inn, or khan, as it was called, built of stones, very roughly put together. It was a poor place, scarcely better than a cave; but it promised shelter and rest, and something like refreshment after hard travelling, and

the sight of it, small as it was, was hailed with joy by the pilgrim, scorched and thirsty, and ready to drop from his saddle from fatigue.

"But to our story. It was on this road, going from Jerusalem, that a man was riding alone. He was an unknown man, not rich or high-born, or great in office; some merchant or artisan whom business called away from the great city. He had passed what was perhaps the severest part of the way,—that where the rocky road descended some two thousand feet from the mountains about Jerusalem to the plain,—and had reached a little grassy nook at no great distance from the inn we have described. At this point a band of ruffians dashed out upon him. Being alone, he was quickly overpowered and beaten down with heavy blows, his money was taken, his clothes were stripped off in the twinkling of an eye, and the rogues were away in the hills, leaving him bruised, bloody, stunned, half dead in the road.

"There he lay—not a soul in sight, not a house near enough for his groans to be heard. He was too weak to shout, and even if he had been able he would not have dared to make a noise, lest the robbers should be lingering near, and, hearing him, should come back and finish their work by killing him to prevent his telling tales.

"Thus he lay for some hours listening for footsteps. At last he heard them with his quick ear; somebody was coming. Yes, somebody was coming: there was hope. The hope became very strong indeed when, turning his eyes in the direction whence the sound came, he saw that the traveller was a priest, a holy man, devoted to offices of religion, and even then probably intent on some pious work. He must be one of the brotherhood of Jericho, on his way to Jerusalem to assist at the great festival which was to take place there

the next day. How fortunate that it was a priest, and a priest of rank, too! Not some trader, some merchant, some rich gentleman, who would not think it worth his while to stop for such a poor fellow as he was! How fortunate it was a Jew, and not some hateful Samaritan, who might stop and kick him as he lay in his blood and agony.

"The priest came nearer: he was making haste; he was urging his horse to his utmost speed. 'Good, kind soul!' murmured the wounded man. 'He has seen me, he is making all possible speed to come to me without an instant's delay. Ah! God bless him! I hope he will not break his horse's legs or his own neck in his impatience to reach me with his succor. He must have everything I want, and he is a servant of God.'

"Yes, the priest was making haste, there was no doubt about that; but unfortunately his haste was not due quite to his anxiety to help his wounded countryman and fellow-citizen out of his difficulty. On the contrary, he was simply anxious to get to the end of his journey before nightfall, and have a comfortable sleep to prepare him for his duties on the following morning. Those duties were exceedingly important and heavy. He must clean and fill the lamps of the golden chandelier, he must set out the shewbread, he must feed the fire on the grand altar and take away all the ashes, he must prepare some of the victims for sacrifice, and be ready to wave the burnt flesh in the air before the Lord: besides all this, which was enough of itself to occupy the whole day, he had to count the money in the poor-box, and to blow the great brass trumpets several times in the course of the day—a labor which required a vast deal of breath, and was not to be done by anybody who had not enjoyed a good night's rest.

Absorbed in thoughts so deep and serious, he could not loiter on his way. At this particular moment he was urging his beast very hard, for this part of the road had a bad name; several murders had been committed there lately, and the thieves would as soon attack a priest as any other. Suddenly he came upon the wounded man, and heard him implore aid.

"'Ah!' said he to himself, 'robbers about; must make haste; should not like to be stopped and plundered; should very much dislike to be knocked on the head. What would they do in the Temple to-morrow if I was not there to kill the sheep and oxen, burnish the lamps of the sanctuary, and make the fires? Nothing would go on properly. It was lucky I did not come along sooner: the rascals might have served me as they have this fellow. Lord save us! It was a narrow escape!'

"So, without deigning to look a second time at the wounded man, pretending not to see him or hear him or know that he was there, he passed by on the other side of the way. The wounded man gave a deep groan, and turned on his side as if to die.

"Scarcely was the priest out of sight—the sound of his horse's hoofs had not died away on the air—when a Levite approached. He too was coming from Jericho, and, like the priest, was on his way to Jerusalem, being one of the body detailed for service in the Temple on the following day. He was riding comfortably along, when the cry of a man in pain reached his ear. He reined in his horse, and listened; the cry came again. 'Perhaps it is one of my brethren,' he said, 'who has met with an accident, or been attacked by sudden sickness; I must go and see.' He crossed over, and threw a glance at the body.

"'Poor fellow, that is a bad wound; the man has been stabbed; there are robbers; no help for him now; to stop and help him would be to waste time. I have ever so many things to do in Jerusalem. There are the Temple gates to be opened early in the morning; ever so many pots and pans to wash; loaves of bread to be baked, and groceries to be bought for the priests. Then I must see that the singers are ready, and in practice, that the trumpets and sackbuts and psalteries are in good tune, and that the marble floors are properly swept; after that comes the dirty work of slaughtering and skinning the poor beasts who are brought in to be sacrificed. I cannot do all this, and play doctor besides. I must either neglect my solemn duties in Jerusalem, or let this man die. If I stop, and do all that is necessary in a case like this, it will keep me here all night, and it will be a poor excuse to give to-morrow that I paused on the road to nurse a dying man. If it were only some great person whom I knew, it would be different; but this seems to be some poor fellow of no account,—a publican, I dare say, carrying home his money-bags; served him right for taking poor people's shillings to support this vile Roman government. Let us take a nearer look at him. Bless me, his wound is fresh; the robbers cannot be far off now; what if they should come back, and catch me? Hark; was not that the sound of horses' hoofs? They are coming this very moment.'

"Thereupon he gave his horse a blow, and made off, not daring to look behind him.

"The sound of hoofs which startled the Levite proved to be the noise, not of robbers, but of another traveller, whose horse came stumbling over the rough stones of the road. He was going in the

opposite direction to that which the priest and Levite were pursuing; and the cause that carried them there sent him away,—namely, the great festival. For he was a Samaritan. Of course he could have no part in the solemnities, and no interest in them. The priest would not have allowed him to offer a sacrifice in the Temple, the Levite would have turned him out of the court-yard if he had seen him there. Very likely the people in the streets, under the excitement of religion, would have insulted him as worse than a Pagan.

"In ordinary times the Jew hated the Samaritan so much that he would not eat, drink, or sleep with him; would not ride with him in the same company, or walk with him on the same side of the street, or have any business dealings with him, or indeed any dealings with him whatever. The Samaritans were a different people from the Jews, but they were instructed in the Jews' religion. They had been sent to Palestine by the King of Babylon, to make a colony in Palestine, before the Israelites were sent; and when the Israelites came, and began to build their new Temple, the Samaritans begged to be allowed to help them. This the Jews, in their pride of race, refused, and the Samaritans, angry at the refusal, built a Temple for themselves on Mount Gerizim, where they had their own worship.

"Thus it happened that the two peoples, having very much the same religious belief, adoring the same God, venerating the same law, honoring the same teachers and prophets, reading the same holy books, rejoicing in the same national traditions, as well as sharing in a common humanity, never worshipped together, nor could either believe that God accepted the worship of the other. This old quarrel had lasted for ages, for religious quarrels always last longer and are much fiercer than any others; and now this

Samaritan was going away from Jerusalem to avoid the feast which drew the Jews thither.

"He was thinking rather sadly of all these things when he heard a faint cry for help proceeding from the road immediately before him. He hastened forward, and in a turn of the path came to the wounded man. At once he dismounted, and, thinking of nothing but his duty to a human creature, knelt down beside him to examine the number and character of his hurts.

"At the first glance it was plain that the bleeding man was a Jew; that was evident from his features. It was an enemy of his race, a man who on meeting him in the street would have crossed over rather than touch his garment. No matter; he was a fellow-creature, he was unfortunate, he was dying from exhaustion.

"'If I were in his place I should wish him to forget that I was a Samaritan; I will forget that he is a Jew.'

"So saying, he stanched the blood and dressed the wound as well as he could with ointment that he had with him, then he raised him tenderly and placed him on his own horse, he himself walking by the side, at once guiding the animal and supporting the man.

"By good fortune, the inn I have described was not a great way from the part of the road where all this happened. To this inn the kind Samaritan brought his charge, and here he stayed with him all night, washed his wound, watched by his bedside, administered soothing draughts to make him sleep, and mixed balsams for his wounded side.

"In the morning he was obliged to pursue his journey, but he left the sufferer in the care of the inn-keeper, with particular directions that he should have everything he wanted, and should be made as

comfortable as the place and what it could furnish would allow. To make sure that all should be done as it should be, he took out his purse, put the money in the landlord's hand, and said, 'Make him as easy as you can; let him have every attention possible; do not spare expense. I shall be coming by again in a few days, and will repay to you then all he has cost you.'

"With this he mounted his horse and rode away.

"When Jesus had ended His story, He turned to the lawyer and said, 'Now for your question. You asked me what I meant by neighbor. I ask you which was the neighbor of the wounded man?'

"The man hung his head, and muttered, 'The person that helped him, I suppose.'

"'And who was the Samaritan's neighbor?'

"'Why, of course, the person who needed his help.'

"'Very well; do the same thing yourself to those who need your help, and you will find the way to the Eternal Life.'"

"Now it came to pass as they went, that He entered into a certain village." Jesus and His disciples were going about from place to place, doing good, when they "entered into a certain village," the town of Bethany, near Jerusalem, hitherto unvisited, but destined to become a favorite resort for the weary and persecuted Son of God. Here He was carrying on His customary labors, and two women became interested in Him. They were sisters, and had a brother Lazarus. The eldest of the family, Martha, invited the Teacher to her house to enjoy its hospitality, as He was homeless. At this time she had not become a believer, or disciple of the Lord; but her sister Mary had yielded Him her confidence, and was eager to learn the

JESUS AT BETHANY WITH MARY AND MARTHA.

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whole truth from His sacred lips. Partly for her sake, and partly on account of her own interest, Martha had entertained the Preacher of righteousness, whose testimony had roused her religious sensibilities, and created conviction enough to render her petulant and irritable, without subduing her strong nature. Her spirits were ruffled and her equanimity was disturbed. When Jesus came into their dwelling, Mary soon found a place "at His feet," where she "heard His word," which had become, now, more than meat and drink to her rejoicing heart. She learned more and more of that kingdom which He had publicly preached, and into which she was entered as a peaceful subject.

But Martha, pierced with arrows of conviction, paid Him no attention, kept aloof from His presence, and set about her housework; and though some have guessed that she was busied in preparations for a meal, we are better warranted in believing that she was trying to work off her convictions, by cumbering herself with "much serving," at a time when she ought to have been listening to her Guest's conversation. So Saul, exceedingly mad against the Christians, whose firmness nothing could shake, went away from the stoning of Stephen to get rid of his own unrest, and quiet his conscience by persecuting believers in Jerusalem, and in all the region round about, even as far as Damascus. Martha, annoyed by Mary's evident enjoyment of the Lord's spiritual conversation, and unable longer to restrain her impatience, abruptly appears in the room, and tosses out a rude censure of her guest. Instead of asking Him to excuse Mary, and calling her politely out of His presence, and privately requesting her assistance, she says, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me."

It was a piece of impertinence, which can be accounted for only on the ground that she was under serious impressions, which were like a goad thorning her proud and wilful nature till she hardly knew how to contain herself, but must needs manifest her annoyance to the Lord in a most provoking reproof, aimed equally at Him and His disciple Mary.

Jesus was accustomed to this effect of His ministry, and it did not throw Him off His balance or anger Him. He might justly have excused Himself from her hospitality, and retired in disgust to seek another home. But He read the heart of the energetic and conscience-smitten woman, and was not at all disconcerted by her censoriousness. He offered no apology to shield Himself, firmly reproved her worldliness, uttered a truth of cutting directness, and defended Mary in words which revealed the sinner's unsatisfied restlessness, and contrasted it with Mary's quiet repose, which results from her choice of "that good part which shall not be taken away from her." "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful." How earnestly He looked into her flashing eye, how calmly and solemnly He spoke of her anxiety and perturbation of mind, and with what dignity He called her from her painful service to the peaceful rest He gives. He asserts the superiority of His gift in the unexaggerated language which carries with it the perfection of power. "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." This incident, simple as it is, bears a pearl on its bosom richer than any jewel that ever sparkled on the breast of royalty or the brow of beauty. For this, the story is preserved, and we may hold it up and contemplate its richness of suggestion; and learn how to receive Him, when He comes to us with gracious purpose and a heavenly calling.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JESUS TEACHES TO PRAY.

TWO VERSIONS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.—ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS OF THAT MODEL PETITION.—WONDERFUL HISTORY.—ITS SPIRIT.—FULNESS AND VARIETY ILLUSTRATED FROM OTHER SCRIPTURES.—ACROSTICAL PARAPHRASE.—JESUS URGES IMPORTUNITY IN PRAYER.—PARABLE OF THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT.—GOD'S LOVE GREATER THAN OURS TO OUR CHILDREN.—HE WILL HEAR US.—BENEFITS OF EARNESTNESS AND CONTINUANCE IN PRAYER.—SIX STAGES OR STEPS DESCRIBED.

QUAINT English poet, George Herbert, says:

"By all means use sometimes to be alone.
Salute thyself; see what thy soul doth wear;
Dare to look in thy chest; for 'tis thine own;
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there."

Solitary meditation our Lord accompanied with prayer; and He commended secret devotion to His disciples, in words dear through all ages to the Church of God. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Delightful privilege! Glorious promise!

He also recommended union in prayer, in language most plain and comforting: "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask it shall be done for them of My Father,

For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." In Galilee, when He preached on the mountain, He gave His disciples many directions about praying, and there commanded them to pray "after this manner":

COMMON VERSION.	REVISED VERSION.
Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.	Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.	Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also on the earth.
Give us this day our daily bread.	Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.	And forgive us our debts, as also we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.	And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

He prayed a great deal, and some of His prayers have been left us. His example had influence with the disciples; and when, in Judea, He had been engaged in His devotions, they asked Him to teach them how to pray. John had given his followers lessons in this exercise, and they craved from Jesus instructions respecting this duty. He therefore repeated "The Lord's Prayer," which contains a bookful of meaning in simplest speech. It starts with the idea of fatherly love, and passes to that of heavenly majesty. Confidence and adoration are necessary to fitting prayer. Then the wish is expressed that God's perfections as contained in His Name may have due honor. What could be more suitable?

Then the petitioner desires that His authority should be recognized

and firmly established; and that what He wills should also be done by men on earth as perfectly as in Heaven. Most noble and appropriate beginning of an address by man to the Great God!

This is followed by the expression of our dependence for necessary food on Him who makes the grass to grow on the mountains, and grain to wave in the valleys.

As sinners we need forgiveness from God, as really as those who have done us wrong need forgiveness from us. And unless we have a merciful spirit towards our fellow-beings, we cannot expect God to pardon our offences against Him.

The temptations of the world are such, and so many, that if we are permitted to go into them, we shall certainly sin and offend God. We are to pray that He will not allow us to be tempted to do wrong, above what we are able to bear. And even our weak minds and hearts He must keep from too heavy trials and tests, or they will break down. Oh how needful this supplication every hour!

The evil that is in the world threatens us, or presses in upon us like the cold of winter, like water into a leaking ship, or like an enemy besieging a fortress. None can bring us help but God; and He can do for us exceeding abundantly, above all we ask or think. As we shall always suffer from the evil that is in the world, while we live here, the disciple looks and begs for deliverance from sin and all its consequences forever. So vast and numerous are the subjects suggested in this prayer! The Iron Duke, the hero of Waterloo, Wellington, said: "The Lord's Prayer alone is an evidence of the truth of Christianity,—so admirably is that prayer accommodated to all our wants." It has had a wonderful history; for millions of children have early learned to repeat it from the lips of Christian mothers, and

hundreds of millions have chanted and spoken it in all languages under heaven.

The spirit of this petition is:

"A filial spirit—Father.

"A catholic spirit—Our Father.

"A reverential spirit—Hallowed be Thy name.

"A missionary spirit—Thy kingdom come.

"An obedient spirit—Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

"A dependent spirit—Give us this day our daily bread.

"A forgiving spirit—And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

"A cautious spirit—And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

"A confidential and adoring spirit—For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

Its fulness and variety may be seen from the following description, and the collection of scriptures which ingeniously illustrate it:

Our Father - - - - -	Isaiah lxiii. 16.
1. By right of creation - - - -	Malachi ii. 10.
2. By bountiful provision - - - -	Psalm cxlv. 16.
3. By gracious adoption - - - -	Ephesians i. 5.
Who art in Heaven - - -	1 Kings viii. 43
1. The throne of Thy glory - - -	Isaiah lxvi. 1.
2. The portion of Thy children - - -	1 Peter i. 4.
3. The temple of Thy angels - - -	Isaiah vi. 1.
Hallowed be Thy name - - -	Psalm cxv. 1.
1. By the thoughts of our hearts - -	Psalm lxxxvi. ii.

2. By the words of our lips - - - Psalm li. 15.
3. By the works of our hands - - - 1 Corinthians x. 31.

Thy kingdom come - - - Psalm cx. 2.

1. Of providence to defend us - - - Psalm xvii. 8.
2. Of grace to refine us - - - - 1 Thessalonians v. 23.
3. Of glory to crown us - - - - Colossians iii. 4.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven - - - - - Acts xxxi. 14.

1. Towards us, without resistance - - 1 Samuel iii. 18.
2. By us, without compulsion - - - Psalm cxix. 36.
3. Universally, without exception - - Luke i. 6.
4. Eternally, without declension - - - Psalm cxix. 93.

Give us this day our daily bread—

1. Of necessity, for our bodies - - - Proverbs xxx. 8.
2. Of eternal life, for our souls - - John vi. 34.

And forgive us our trespasses - Psalm xxv. 11.

1. Against the commands of Thy law - 1 John iii. 4.
2. Against the grace of Thy gospel - - 1 Timothy i. 13.

As we forgive them that trespass against us - - - - - Matthew vi. 15.

1. By defaming our character - - - Matthew v. 11.
2. By embezzling our property - - Philemon 18.
3. By abusing our persons - - - - Acts vii. 60.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil - - Matthew xxvi. 41.

1 Of overwhelming afflictions - - - Psalm cxxx. 1.
2. Of worldly enticements - - - 1 John ii. 16.
3. Of Satan's devices - - - - - 1 Timothy iii. 7.

4.	Of error's seduction - - - -	1 Timothy vi. 10.
5.	Of sinful affections - - - - -	Romans i. 26.
	For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever -	Jude 25.
1.	Thy kingdom governs all - - -	Psalm ciii. 19.
2.	Thy power subdues all - - -	Philippians iii. 20, 21.
3.	Thy glory is above all - - - -	Psalms cxlviii. 13.
	Amen - - - - -	Ephesians i. 11.
1.	As it is in Thy purposes - - -	Isaiah xiv. 27.
2.	So is it in Thy promises - - -	2 Corinthians i. 20.
3.	So be it in our prayers - - - -	Revelation xxii. 20.
4.	So shall it be to Thy praise - -	Revelation xix. 4.

Little thought the men who asked for a lesson in prayer, that the Saviour's beautiful form of words would be echoed round the earth, and call out the thoughts of the greatest and best in all succeeding times. Sermons, discourses, treatises, and poems have been multiplied to thousands. Here follows an

ACROSTICAL PARAPHRASE.

"OUR Lord and King, who reign'st enthroned on high,
FATHER of Light! mysterious Deity!
WHO art the great I AM, the last, the first;
ART righteous, holy, merciful, and just.
IN realms of glory, scenes where angels sing,
HEAVEN is the dwelling-place of God our King.
HALLOWED Thy name, which doth all names transcend,
BE Thou adored, our great almighty Friend;

THY glory shines beyond creation's bound ;
NAME us 'mong those Thy choicest gifts surround
THY kingdom towers beyond Thy starry skies ;
KINGDOM Satanic falls, but Thine shall rise.
COME, let Thine empire, O Thou Holy One ;
THY great and everlasting will be done.
WILL God make known His will, His power display?
BE it the work of mortals to obey.
DONE is the great, the wondrous work of love ;
ON Calvary's cross He died, but reigns above ;
EARTH bears the record in Thy holy word.
AS heaven adores Thy love, let earth, O Lord ;
IT shines transcendent in the eternal skies ;
IS praised in heaven—for man, the Saviour dies.
IN songs immortal, angels laud His name ;
HEAVEN shouts with joy, and saints His love proclaim
GIVE us, O Lord, our food, nor cease to give
US needful food on which our souls may live !
THIS be our boon to-day and days to come ;
DAY without end in our eternal home.
OUR needy souls supply from day to day ;
DAILY assist and aid us when we pray ;
BREAD though we ask ; yet, Lord, Thy blessings lend,
AND make us grateful when Thy gifts descend.
FORGIVE our sins, which in destruction place
US, the vile rebels of a rebel race ;
OUR follies, faults, and trespasses forgive ;
DEBTS which we ne'er can pay, nor Thou receive.
AS we, O Lord, our neighbors' faults o'erlook ;
WE beg Thou'ds't blot ours from Thy memory's book.
FORGIVE our enemies, extend Thy grace
OUR souls to save, e'en Adam's guilty race.
DEBTORS to Thee in gratitude and love,
AND in that duty paid by saints above ;
LEAD us from sin, and in Thy mercy raise
US from the tempter and his hellish ways.

NOT in our own, but in His name who bled,
INTO Thine ear we pour our every need.
TEMPTATION'S fatal charm help us to shun ;
BUT may we conquer through Thy conquering **Son ;**
DELIVER us from all that can annoy
US in this world, and may our souls destroy.
FROM all calamities that man betide,
EVIL and death, O turn our feet aside,—
FOR we are mortal worms, and cleave to **clay,—**
THINE 'tis to rule, and mortals' to obey.
IS not Thy mercy, Lord, forever free ?
THE whole creation knows no God but **Thee.**
KINGDOM and empire in Thy presence **fall ;**
THE King eternal reigns, the King of all.
POWER is Thine—to Thee be glory given,
AND be Thy name adored by earth and **heaven.**
THE praise of saints and angels is Thy **own ;**
GLORY to Thee, the Everlasting One.
FOREVER be Thy holy name adored.
AMEN ! Hosannah ! blessed be the Lord."

Jesus set the example of habitual praying, and further urged upon His disciples, when He gave them "The Lord's Prayer," the privilege and duty of continuing to pray till the answer should come from God. As usual He placed a light to shine on His meaning, by using the parable of the Friend at Midnight. In hot countries, such as Palestine was, much travelling is done in the night, when the air is cool. A friend in his journey arrives at midnight at your house, says Christ. He is hungry, but you did not expect him, and have nothing to set before him for supper. In the extremity you go to a neighbor's house, after all have gone to bed, and knock at his door, and tell him in a loud voice how you are situated. The neighbor thus disturbed at a late hour, is offended, and bids you begone. He is in

bed with his children, and cannot get up, and be troubled to accommodate you. But you are not to be put off by this plea—he has the three loaves of bread, and you plead earnestly for them. The man finally rises, finds what you ask for, and gives it to you, because you will not be denied. With similar perseverance you are to ask God for the things you need. "For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Then, in His earnestness on this subject, Jesus appeals to their paternal instincts. When your boy asks you for bread, you do not give him a stone to break his teeth on. When he asks for a fish to nourish him, you do not give him a serpent to bite and poison him. When he asks for an egg, you do not hold out a scorpion to sting him to death. Nay, you love and bless your children, and do all you can to benefit and gratify them. You are selfish and evil as compared with God; and shall not He, your Heavenly Father, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? A child may say, "Give me bread," and run away before the request can be answered; and so a prayer may be quickly offered and no answer expected. Such a request procures no blessing. It is only he who asks, seeks, knocks, pleads, urges and importunes, who waits long enough on God to get the "good things" which God wants to bestow. He really needs them, feels their need, knows his dependence on God, and appreciates God's mercy and goodness, when he is heard and answered. They do him good, because he is prepared for them; and they bind him with golden bands of gratitude and love to the Lord, the Giver.

"What conception have we of believing prayer which opens heaven? What of persevering prayer which causes us to stand con-

tinually on the watch-tower in the daytime, and which sets us in our ward whole nights? What of importunate prayer which storms heaven with its violence and force? What of united prayer, gathering us together to ask help of the Lord? What of consistent prayer which regards no iniquity in our hearts? What of practical prayer which fulfils itself?"

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE WELL.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

SINS REBUKED.

TONGUES LOOSED.—JESUS REBUTS THE CHARGE THAT HE IS BEELZEBUB'S SERVANT.—WORK WITH AND NOT AGAINST JESUS.—OBEDIENCE TO GOD BETTER THAN BEING MARY'S SON.—CLAIMS TO BE GREATER THAN SOLOMON AND JONAH.—SOME MEN'S CONDEMNATION SEVERER THAN THAT OF OTHERS.—NEED OF A PURE SOUL.—DINES WITH AN UNFRIENDLY PHARISEE.—JESUS INSULTED FOR NOT WASHING HIS HANDS.—EXHORTS TO MAKE FOUL HEARTS CLEAN.—DEFINES HYPOCRISY.—REBUKES THE LAWYERS.—A LION AT BAY.—IMMENSE AUDIENCE.—EARNEST PREACHING.—PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT.—WARNING AGAINST COVETOUSNESS.—THE RICH FOOL.—ANXIETY ABOUT SUPPORT REPROVED.—EXHORTS TO CHEERFULNESS IN DUTY.—RELIGION LIKE FIRE IN ITS EFFECTS.—ILLUSTRATES THE NECESSITY OF SPEEDY REPENTANCE.—GREAT MISFORTUNES DO NOT PROVE THE VICTIMS GREAT SINNERS.—THE BARREN FIG-TREE.—ITS LESSONS.

THE casting out of a devil from a dumb man loosed his tongue; yea, and loosed several tongues against Jesus. The enemies said He was working for the chief devil, Beelzebub. Jesus said it was contrary to good sense to suppose that Satan would employ Him to do men good, and free them from devils and the evils of being possessed by demons. He cuttingly asked, whether their own people who professed to cast out devils were in league with Satan. Beelzebub, strong as he is, is overpowered by Me, and I take away his power, and relieve his victims. The contest goes on, and they who work with Me, work with the finger and power of God, and succeed. All My foes

fail, and their labors are lost. For even if you seem to drive out the devil without My help, he only leaves for a time. When he is discontented with wandering about, he comes back and finds all things in readiness. There are no bars or bolts of holy love and right principle to keep him out; and he goes and gathers a number of spirits more wicked than himself, and they flock into the man's open heart, and he then falls into a worse condition than that in which you found him. A mighty argument for working with Jesus, and not against Him!

A woman who heard His powerful statements was so charmed, that she invoked a blessing on the mother of such a Son. Jesus answered that it was a much better and greater privilege, and more honorable, to hear and obey God's word. Thus He always insisted that right doing, the love and service of God from the heart, gave the highest distinction, and should be most faithfully sought after by the humble and the lofty.

Some people asked for a sign, such as the old prophets used to give, that God was with Him "of a truth." He had already given a myriad of these; and it was insulting to keep seeking a new proof that He was what He professed to be—the Son of God. He refused to please them, and promised only the sign of Jonah. That we know was His death, burial, and resurrection. He here pronounces them an evil generation, a bad set of people. The queen of the south, who came from far to see Solomon, and the Ninevites who repented under Jonah's preaching should rise in judgment against them, because He was greater than Solomon and Jonah. When persons instructed in the Scriptures deny and reject Jesus and His salvation, while heathen who have been reared in falsehood and sin receive

and follow Him, He is deeply grieved by the former, and the conduct of the latter condemns those who sin against bright light.

He says that the soul is like the eye. If you have a clear eye, your body is full of light; if not, it is full of darkness. If your soul is pure and good, you shall walk in light. Solomon and Jonah were lights in their day; and He is now able to illuminate the way of truth. He is shining for their guidance.

In the midst of His sermon, or conversation, a Pharisee urged Him, and He went in to dine with him. He was invited with no kind intention; and He was at once abused, because He had not washed before eating. The Pharisees were very particular about this ceremony, not for cleanliness, but as a religious and meritorious observance. They prided themselves on such matters. If they happened to touch an outsider they were defiled, and must plunge their arms up to the elbows in water. In answer to the insulting remark, Jesus said that they appeared outwardly good, but their hearts were cruel and wicked. They were fools for making only the body clean, when their Creator wanted them to have pure hearts. Cleanse the inward parts from sins, and that which men see will then be good, as well as that which God sees. He pronounced a woe on the Pharisees, because they were strict in getting tithes, but neglected righteousness and piety. They obeyed one law, and disobeyed another. They were anxious to be foremost and popular. He called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites; and as men walk over graves without knowing what decay and dampness are below them, so, said He, do they look on you with favor, while your hearts are foul. The lawyers said that He reproached them. Jesus then rebuked their sins with awful severity. How grandly He spoke to that

company, like one of the old prophets, and uncovered all their crimes! They gathered around Him with questions, and violently pressed Him to say something they could use against His life. He was like a lion surrounded by a troop of wolves, and royally did He meet His cowardly and treacherous assailants. They could not wound and disable, nor entangle and overthrow Him. The tidings of this hot pursuit ran like fire in dry leaves, and drew together so many persons that they trampled on one another in their eagerness to hear Him. He addressed them in strong terms, beseeching them not to be hypocrites, because all would come out at last; not to fear death in His cause, for God would take care of them; not to deny but confess Him, for on this would depend God's acceptance or rejection of them before the angels. Then He added that solemn warning about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. It would never be forgiven in this world or the next. That Spirit would aid them in the direst hour, to reply to all charges in court or synagogue.

Some man thought to turn an honest penny, by procuring the interference of Jesus in his behalf about a matter of business. This led Him to warn against covetousness, or undue desire and love of money and property. There was a rich man, He said, who had such quantities of grain and fruit that he knew not how to dispose of them, without building larger barns. Instead of saying—I will give my money to educate the young, to provide homes and comforts for the poor, and asylums for the unfortunate, and to make men happier and better, he resolved to keep all he had, and have a good time the rest of his days, in eating, drinking, making merry, and passing his life in ease. This was utterly selfish, and made too much of money, as if it were God. Then came his condemnation

from Heaven—"Fool!" To-night you shall die, and leave all your goods behind you. You have forgotten to ask peace with God, and to honor Him by doing His will, and by prayer; you have no interest in His love or in the blessings of heaven; you cannot take a penny with you, and you lose all that is truly worth living for. His favor is life, and His loving-kindness is better than life. Then He turned to His disciples, and solemnly warned them against taking thought, or, rather, being anxious and troubled, about their bodily wants. Birds are fed, flowers are clothed in robes more gorgeous than Solomon's royal array, and shall not God provide for His dear children? They perish not, but live forever, and God will surely crown them His in Heaven. They must not fear, but be actively waiting for the full revelation of His goodness, by living holy lives, by striving against drowsiness in His service, and by faithfully watching to hear and obey every command of the Lord. These points He made plain and strong, by using incidents of common life to illustrate His meaning. As usual, so here, He mingled threatenings with promises, to show that these things are not mere matters of choice, but duties enjoined and enforced by God the King. He knew that such teachings would move men deeply; and He compares them to fire which burns, and wastes or blesses. He speaks of His own conflict, which hastens; and compares it to an overwhelming flood. He cannot accomplish His mission till He has suffered even unto death. Then His refining fire would spread, and separate the wicked unbelievers from His trusting disciples.

He severely remarks on the contrast between men's skill in foretelling the weather by signs in the sky, and their ignorance of the truths signified in what is passing before them in political events,

and especially in His ministry. They ought not to need such miracles and providential visitations, but should repent at once, because they know their duty. The time is short in which to be saved. They are like a man who is about to be tried and punished, —unless they are reconciled quickly to God, He will cast them into the place of punishment, from which there is no escape.

Some of His audience mentioned the dreadful fate of certain Galileans killed by Pilate. A tower near the Pool of Siloam had fallen and buried in its fall eighteen persons. These awful calamities many held to be a punishment for great sins. But Jesus said that the sufferers by these events were not worse sinners than other men. At least there was no such conclusion to be drawn from their misfortunes. The men who heard Him need not feel that they had no great sins to be sorry for, because they were not so punished. For, said the Preacher, unless you repent you shall all perish in the same manner, or by a destruction as real and terrible as that which fell on them. This truth He made more striking by the Parable of the Barren Fig-tree. A man planted one of these trees in order that he might have a supply of delicious fruit from it, year by year. He was disappointed regularly for three years, because it bore nothing. Then he gave orders to have it cut down, because it took up room in his garden, and was worthless. But the keeper of the vineyard or garden prayed that he would let him try by careful culture to make it bear the next year. If that failed, the fruitless tree should be cut down. It was a lesson of deep meaning to the hearers, and called them to instant repentance and righteousness. While He rebuked sins, He always invited sinners to find refuge, rest, safety, and eternal life in Him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

RENEWED EXCITEMENT IN JERUSALEM.

THE CASE OF A BLIND BEGGAR RAISES VARIOUS QUESTIONS.—JESUS PUTS THEM ASIDE AND HEALS HIM.—MANNER OF THE CURE.—POOL OF SILOAM.—THE BEGGAR IS INTERVIEWED.—SANHEDRIM PUBLICLY INTERROGATES HIM.—WITNESSES SUBSTANTIATE THE CURE.—THE BEGGAR STANDS UP FOR JESUS, BUT DOES NOT KNOW HIM.—IS EXCOMMUNICATED.—JESUS TAKES HIM INTO HIS CHURCH.—PHARISEES CUT UP BY THE LORD.—THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—HE WILL DIE FOR HIS SHEEP.—GREAT DIVISIONS OF OPINION ABOUT HIM.—DECEMBER 20, A.D. 29.—FEAST OF THE DEDICATION.—ORIGIN OF ITS OBSERVANCE.—ANTIOCHUS.—JUDAS MACCABÆUS.—JESUS WALKS IN SOLOMON'S PORCH.—JEWS SEEK TO ENTRAP HIM.—BOLDLY ASSERTS HIS DEITY.—THEY TAKE STONES TO KILL HIM.—HIS CLAIMS ENRAGE THEM.—HIS ESCAPE WELCOMED BY JOHN'S DISCIPLES AT THE PLACE OF HIS BAPTISM.—MEN BELIEVE OR DISBELIEVE ACCORDING TO THE STATE OF THE HEART.

A BLIND man, unable to work, sat begging as Jesus and His disciples passed by. They inquired about his affliction, and found that he was born without sight. He had suffered for many years, and was obliged to ask people to help him, or starve. The question arose, as they talked among themselves, whether this had come upon him on account of his being born in sin, or because of his parents' sins. Sin they thought must be the occasion of such a misfortune. Jesus told them not to look for the sin, but to see in the miserable man's situation an opportunity for God to do a great work, and for Him to

show Himself the light of the world. Then He made a wad of clay and covered the man's eyes, and ordered him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. The disciples observed that the name of the water was "Sent," and the man was sent to wash off the clay in its cool basin. He came back seeing. Everybody who knew the man was excited, and wanted to know if he was the blind beggar. He told them he was the very man, explained the cure, and said he did not know anything about the person who cured him, only that His name was Jesus. The cure was done on the Sabbath, and this made a pretext for calling the beggar before the Sanhedrim, to whom he told his story again. They were divided over Jesus, some saying He was a sinner for healing on the Sabbath, and others that a bad man could not do these miracles. The beggar, when asked his opinion, said He was a prophet. This confounded them; and they tried to make it appear that he was never blind, by calling in his parents. These honest people testified to the facts, but would say nothing about Jesus. They were afraid; for the leaders had agreed among themselves to expel from the Jewish church any and every one who acknowledged Him to be Christ. They called on the blind beggar once more, and commanded him to praise God, and not Jesus, for his recovery. Jesus, they said, was a sinner. The bold man stood up for Jesus bravely, and mocked the Jews, and so thoroughly beat them by his arguments, that they got angry, and excluded him on the spot. This amounted to a denial of the privileges of the synagogue for thirty days to himself and his family.

When Jesus heard of the poor man's excommunication, He found him, and opened the eyes of his mind to see Him as the Son of God, and the Saviour. The man believed, and worshipped Him. The

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Lord could not help speaking a truth in connection with it, which cut the Pharisees to the quick. They were blind, because they would not see the truth, and were therefore peculiarly sinful.

They had called Him a pretender, and not a true prophet; and He now answered their charge, by using a figure drawn from the habits of men who keep sheep in Eastern countries. "They have a name for every sheep, and every sheep knows its name when it is called. And then the shepherd does not drive the flock, but he leads them, going before." He describes false teachers of religion as thieves and robbers, while He is the Good Shepherd. He has sheep who know His voice and follow Him, and He leads them forth to pasture. He also loves them, so that He will lay down His life for them. God has permitted Him to die for His followers, and for all who shall believe on Him, and this He will do. It was a strange way of speaking; and some said He had a devil, and others that He was crazy; while sensible people said His discourses and miracles were proofs that He was not possessed by a demon. These remarks, discussions, and wonderful events caused widespread inquiry among the whole population of Jerusalem.

At this time occurred the Feast of the Dedication, about December 20, in A.D. 29. This was observed in remembrance of a memorable passage in Jewish history. About one hundred and sixty-eight years before Christ, Antiochus, a heathen king of Syria, conquered Jerusalem, robbed the Temple, set up an image of Jupiter on the altar, and then sacrificed a swine. The place of their worship was so forsaken that shrubs grew in the courts, and desolation reigned on every hand. They called the statue and the sacrifice, "the abomination of desolation." After three years of this desecra-

tion, that noble old warrior, Judas Maccabæus, conquered Antiochus, repaired the Temple, and offered appropriate sacrifice to God on a new altar. They spent eight days in dedicating the place anew, and afterwards the anniversary was observed every year with great joy. It was sometimes known as the Feast of the Lights, because people often celebrated it by lighting up their houses.

Jesus at this time was walking and conversing with His disciples in Solomon's Porch, when some Jews begged to be plainly told whether He was really Christ or not. They professed to be greatly concerned to know the truth, but their inner motive was to find out some way by which they might lawfully put Him to death. Jesus referred them to His words and works, which were plain enough, and were only misunderstood by them because they did not love Him. His followers knew Him, and were safe for eternity in His hands, and in the Father's. He claimed to be one with God. Upon this statement the enmity of His questioners showed itself; for they seized stones to crush Him there. He coolly asked what good work and divine act of His had provoked them. They answered that He had made Himself God, while He was but a man. He quotes Scripture against them, and His own works, and asserts that they ought to know and believe that between Him and the Father there was perfect unity. They did not stop to weigh these things candidly, but blindly made a rush to kill Him. His hour had not come, and He got away from them, and fled from the city and neighborhood, and took refuge in the famous place at the Jordan fords where John baptized so many converts. These, in large numbers, visited Jesus, and found in Him evidence that confirmed what John had said about Him, and they put the two proofs together—John's testimony and

Jesus' ministry—and found reason for accepting Him as Messiah and Saviour.

The same opposite results have always been arrived at by men of contrary purposes. The determined unbelievers see no good in Jesus, and get nothing from Him. Men who humbly seek for salvation, hear His words and the testimony of others, and receive Him with all the vast benefits of His grace.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TAKES REFUGE, AND LABORS IN PEREA.

REGION OF COUNTRY TO WHICH JESUS RETREATS.—MOUNT NEBO.—PLAINS OF MOAB.—MOUNT GILEAD AND ITS BALM.—MIRACLE OF HEALING IN THE SYNAGOGUE.—CALLS THE RULER A "HYPOCRITE."—VINDICATES THIS USE OF THE SABBATH AGAIN.—PROPHESIES THE RAPID PROGRESS OF HIS RELIGION.—STRUGGLE NECESSARY TO GET INTO HEAVEN.—HEROD THREATENS HIS LIFE.—HE DEFIES "THAT FOX."—JERUSALEM MUST HAVE THE DISHONOR OF HIS DEATH.—OUTBURST OF GRIEF AND INDIGNATION.—LAZARUS IS SICK.—TARRIES TWO DAYS LONGER.—DINES, HEALS, ARGUES, REPROVES, AND COUNSELS.—PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.—THE GUESTS.—REQUIREMENTS OF DISCIPLESHIP.—REALITY AND GREATNESS OF THE SOUL.—GOD'S LOVE FOR LOST SOULS.—PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP.—THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER.—THE PRODIGAL SON.—BABYLON.—LOVE OF GOD, AND SELFISHNESS OF THE PHARISEES.—BEST USE OF MONEY.—DIVES AND LAZARUS.—TERRIBLE AND GLORIOUS LESSONS.—TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES.—GOES INTO JUDEA.

IN order to let the excitement die away, Jesus retired from the city of Jerusalem to the region east of the Jordan, between Nebo and Gilead. Mount Nebo rose out of a long line of hills over against the head of the Dead Sea. The hills ran up to the Sea of Galilee, and skirted the whole length of the Jordan valley. From Bethabara to opposite Jericho, the hills did not extend to the river by two or three miles, and the level land was called the Plains of Moab. North of that the hills came close to the river. East of the plain, the range was called the hills of Abarim, and beyond lay Arabia. Mount

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP.

LUKE XV.

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Gilead was thirty miles north of Mount Nebo, and rose like a giant half a mile higher than any other peak near it. The range over which it towered was also called Gilead, and there they made balm from the balsam trees, which sold for twice its weight in silver. The hills were chiefly valuable for timber and pasturage.

In this region Jesus labored, keeping Jerusalem constantly in view as the point to which, at length, His course must tend. He was teaching on a Sabbath in the synagogue, when His eye fell on a poor forlorn cripple, a woman who had suffered from disease eighteen years, and was bent nearly double by her infirmity. He at once called her to Him, and made her straight, so that she stood erect. She naturally praised God for her deliverance, and all the people rejoiced with her. . There was one man indignant—the ruler of the synagogue. He had the spirit of the leaders at Jerusalem, and complained because this had been done on the Sabbath. He addressed the people with a lecture on working six days, and advised them to come on those days to be healed. Jesus then answered, calling him a "hypocrite," and asserting that if men had a right to water their beasts on the Sabbath, surely a daughter of Abraham might be unbound from Satan's bondage on that day. His adversaries were heartily ashamed after this speech; and Jesus took occasion to predict that His religion would show the same power of growth as the mustard seed, and would influence society as leaven raises bread.

In another place, some one asked Him the question about which men have always debated. Will everybody go to heaven, or are there only a few who will be saved? This was not answered to satisfy curiosity, but to quicken the inquirer to seek his own salva-

tion. He told the people that they must make a determined effort to get in at the gate, which was narrow, not wide enough for a soul with its sins bound to it by impenitence and evil habit. There would come a time when all their false hopes would be broken in pieces. If they passed life in folly and wickedness, they would be in the condition of men who should weep, and gnash their teeth, because shut out from the home of the blessed. Let them immediately repent, and turn to God with prayer and trust, and do so with all their hearts.

The Pharisees now tried to frighten Him out of the neighborhood, by saying that Herod was seeking to take His life. He sent word to the king that He should not hasten, for His work was not yet done; nor could a prophet be slain, except in Jerusalem. Then, in an outburst of grief and indignation, He addresses Jerusalem as the enemy of Prophets and Divine messengers; says He would often have brooded the people for their safety; and foretells the city's desolation, and His own entry amidst hosannas.

While in Perea, He received tidings that His beloved friend Lazarus was sick. The sisters Mary and Martha sent Him word from their home in Bethany, near Jerusalem, about twenty-five miles from where He then was. Jesus said that God would be glorified, and He also, by the consequences of this illness. He made no haste, therefore, to go to his relief, but remained two days longer in Perea. They were anxious days for the sorrowing sisters, and busy hours for Jesus.

He was invited by a Pharisee to dine at his house, and, as usual, numbers gathered in the court to see and hear all they could of Jesus. A sufferer from dropsy—a collection of water under the skin—

came to be healed. The spies were present, and were unable to answer His defence of the act of healing on the Sabbath. If an ox were in a pit, suffocating with water, it would be lifted out on the Sabbath day; much more should this man, liable to be choked by his dropsy, be saved even on this day.

He also lectured the guests on their pride and selfishness in taking the best seats and rooms.

His host was also reminded of a nobler act than was common among men. Said He, Instead of asking the rich to your feast, go out and invite the poor, who cannot repay your kindness. At the day when just men appear before God he should be recompensed.

One of the guests remarked that it would be a happy thing to eat bread in the kingdom of God. This called out the parable of the Great Supper. Jesus said it would indeed be a blessed privilege, but few would accept the Lord's invitation. Men were like persons called to a feast, who made excuses and left the seats vacant. This enraged the master of the house, and he sent out his servants, and they, after repeated exertions, filled the tables with those whom everybody had hitherto neglected. The respectable persons for whom preparations were made had no proper excuses, as sinners cannot reasonably excuse themselves from God's service. Persons to whom Jesus first came with the good news of endless life in heaven would fail to welcome and enjoy it; then the Lord would turn from them to nations far off, and these last would be first feasted at His bountiful table of immortal pleasures. In all history, men who make excuses to the messengers of God, though they know the blessedness of true religion, lose the benefits of Jesus' coming; while such as gladly believe the story of the cross, and follow the Saviour in all

obedience, although they have been ignorant and sinful before, become the happy guests at His feast and are forever honored as His friends.

At this time great multitudes were with the Preacher, and much enthusiasm was shown towards His person and doctrines. In order to make them look carefully into their hearts, and to establish them on solid foundations of principle, Jesus repeated His requirements of discipleship, with certain changes of form, and made them more strict and strong. If men would follow Him, they must prefer His love to all other loves—domestic, parental, fraternal, and selfish. They must be ready to suffer shame and pain in His cause. Like a general going to battle, or a man building a house, they should count the cost and calculate the probabilities of defeat or victory. For if they should profess religion, and fall back, they would be like taste less salt, which men tread under foot. He solemnly counselled them to hear what He said, that they might wisely act, and have no reason to think of Him except as a wise and faithful Teacher. He never allows them to feel that it is not best to make every sacrifice in order successfully to follow Him. He impresses on all His hearers the soul's reality and greatness, and leads them to hate all sham or surface treatment of its interests. They must be in terrible earnest to save the soul, and remember that they are dealing with God who is true, and cannot bear hypocrisy or trifling. To His view all souls were alike lost, and equally valuable. A bad man, a poor man, a child, a rich man, or a woman, was in His esteem an object of infinite interest, and He treated them all with respect and fidelity. Sinful and neglected persons gathered to His ministry, because they found Him a Friend. They had nothing to lose, and might gain much by

The Return of the Prodigal Son

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following Him. He showed His humane spirit by coming down among them and sharing their hospitality. This enraged the exclusive Pharisees, and He met their protests against receiving sinners and eating with them by means of parables in which He set forth God's love to those who had deeply sinned.

In that of the Lost Sheep, He shows the pains taken by the shepherd to find one of his flock that has strayed from the fold, and the joy felt by him when he overtakes and brings the wanderer home. Such is the joy felt in heaven over a repenting sinner. Jesus never intimated that any man was so good that he did not need to repent. He had plainly said: "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." The Pharisees felt that they were not blind, nor lost. They were in their own eyes righteous. Jesus takes them on their own ground, and makes it plain that He was doing right in trying to bring back to virtue and to God those whom they call "sinners."

The same beautiful point He illustrates by the parable of the Lost Piece of Silver. A woman has ten pieces of silver, worth fifteen cents apiece. And while she is counting them, one drops and rolls off into a dark corner. She lights her lamp, and with her broom sweeps the room, and finds the little coin, and rejoices greatly over her good fortune. The least soul found, brought back to God, causes angels to be glad in heaven. It is therefore a noble work in Jesus to search for these humble sinners in dark corners.

Some one describes Him as:—

"Always going after the lost sheep, because the lost sheep are the suffering and unhappy sheep,—the sheep who have no homes, who have nobody to feed them or be kind to them. And He goes after them to give them a home, to give them food and kindness

Why should He? Because they deserve it? No, but because they need it. He goes after the lost because He wishes to save the lost. The Good Shepherd thinks that one soul is worth saving as much as another, and therefore He takes care of those who would not be saved but for Him.

"Does it not seem to you that those who do wrong ought to be pitied because they do wrong?—ought to be pitied because they have not the happiness of doing right, because they are tormented by violent passions, and are wild with evil wishes? They have no love, or peace, or joy in them; the sun is not bright to them, the fair landscape is not pleasing, the morning is not glad; they do not love to look in the face of those that love them; kind words make no impression on their hearts. O how unhappy they are! And if they do not know how unhappy they are, if they do not know how many lovely things they lose, if they shut themselves into the outer darkness, then they are most unhappy, and most to be pitied, and the Good Shepherd is more than ever anxious to bring them back to goodness.

"A wise Persian offered this prayer: 'O God, bless the wicked, for Thou hast done enough for the good in making them good.' It was such a prayer as that, that Jesus was offering all the time.

"So, when you do wrong, do not think the Good Shepherd will forget you: it is then He will come after you. You will hear Him call you most tenderly then, you will feel Him pulling at your heart; something within you will tell you He is not far off; if nothing tells you so, it is true that He is not far off. He will look at you through the eyes of some kind teacher; He will whisper to you from the lips of your mother; He will talk to you lower than in a whisper, wher

you are alone with your foolish heart. Do not think you will get out of His way where He cannot find you; do not be afraid He will be tired of looking after you; think of Him as coming swift and sure, and when you think of that, stop, do not go any farther, remain where you are, or go back, so that He can find you with less trouble.

"It is a very sad thing to be a lost sheep, to run away, and be all alone, cold and trembling, in danger of being run over by horses, worried by dogs, eaten by wolves, or carried away to the slaughter-house by hard-hearted men. One would not like to be a lost sheep, if it were only for the pain and peril and sorrow of it; but when one thinks that, if he gets lost, the good, tender Shepherd must take so much trouble to find him again, must travel so far over the rough stones, into the wilderness, through the night and storm, must suffer so much from hunger, and be so pale and weary and anxious, he certainly feels like praying that he may never run away from the fold."

In these two the Lord makes His vindication triumphant; but he crowns all His parables by that of

THE PRODIGAL SON.

A father has two sons, the younger of whom becomes unwilling to live quietly and honestly at home, and asks for his patrimony, or the portion of his father's property which naturally would fall to him at the father's death. The distribution was made, and the elder son remains with his father as a dutiful boy. The proud and self-willed boy gathers up his money and leaves his father's house.

* "He went far off, out of his own country, to the mighty city of Babylon, whose wealth and splendor and luxury drew strangers from

* "Stories from the Lips of the Great Teacher."

every part of the earth. There were the mighty walls, sixty miles in circumference, and hundreds of feet high; there were the gardens lifted on terraces above the roofs of the tallest houses, fringing the walls with verdure, a wonder over all the East; there were the massive gates of bronze; there were the vast squares, where armies could wheel and march, and the king's bands could play martial music, and not be heard from side to side; there were the huge piles of architecture, covering acres of ground, rising on arches, tier above tier, and making the Eastern day more gorgeous with their roofs of gold; there were the gilded statues of god and goddess, and the stupendous temples that made the famous one at Jerusalem look small and cheap; there was kingship and nobility, and pomp and pride; streets roaring with traffic of Egypt, Arabia, India, Phœnicia; warehouses heaped with gems, gold of Ophir, fabrics from Tyre, arms from Ashdod and Ascalon, silks from Damascus; there were the men and costumes of all nations of the earth; there was art, literature, philosophy, science, religion, flourishing as one could see them nowhere else in the world;—Babylon, the city of the Orient, the gem of the Asiatic continent, the diamond which the conquerors and emperors of the globe fought for, wore as the chief jewel of their crowns, and made magnificent at the expense of kingdoms.

"To this superb city—an empire in a city—the young man took his journey, in the flush of his first manhood."

There he plunged into a fast life, and spent all his money. He became poor, and a famine fell on the land, so that he was obliged, in order to keep from starving, to hire himself to a swine-keeper in the country. He was forced to live in the very company of creatures loathsome to an elegant Jew; and even of the pods of the carob-tree,

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE XV.

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which the swine ate, he could not get enough to satisfy hunger. In this degraded, destitute condition, he thought of home, became penitent for his sins against God and his father, and set out for the distant land of his happy youth. The father's heart clung to his absent wicked son, and "one afternoon he went and stood on the door-stone fronting the east, and, shading his eyes with his hand, gazed earnestly out on the landscape. In the distance something moved, which seemed to be the figure of a man. It drew nearer, but slowly, and with irresolute motion; he stopped, rested beneath the olive-trees. Was he tired, or was he sick?

"He comes out of the shadow towards the house, towards the barns. It may be a prowling thief, some vagrant slinking about to find a lodging in the hay-loft. Poor he plainly is, and he comes from far. He is ragged and wild-looking; his beard is long and tangled. Who can it be? He is sitting now on a stone, looking towards the house. The old man watches him with an interest which deepens in intensity every instant. Something tells him who it is.

"Just then the haggard stranger makes a movement that is not to be mistaken. It is he. And at once, without speaking a word, the father runs to him, flings his arms about him, presses the head against his bosom, puts his lips to his forehead, and bursts into a flood of tears.

"The boy tries to fall on his knees, but the father holds him up; tries to hide his shameful face, but the father turns it toward him, and gazes at it with unutterable tenderness; tries to murmur penitence and pardon, but the lips are stopped by kisses.

"'Don't love me so,' sobbed the youth at last; 'don't kiss me so; I don't deserve to be loved; I don't merit your kisses; I am not

your son any more. Let me go to the stables; let me go to the kitchen; give me a crust in charity—it is all I ask. I am a poor, broken, worthless fellow; I cannot even ask your pardon.'

"'Hush, hush!' said the father, 'you are my son, for you come back to me. Come in; come in; I have been waiting for you so long. Ho there! make ready the bath, get out the finest linen; go to my wardrobe, and bring my best robe. You, go instantly, and call in the neighbors; you, go and kill the fatted calf, and see that supper is ready at once.'"

By this part of the parable Jesus described the class he had received and blessed. They had departed from God, sinned, and suffered. When they showed a disposition to return and enjoy God's mercy and blessing, and dwell at home with Him in heaven, they were warmly welcomed, and every pains taken to encourage them to abide under the Father's smile, and wander no more into the ways of the world.

He now paints another class—the very Pharisees who are complaining about His kindness to publicans and sinners.

We go back to the hour when the merry-making begins over the returned prodigal. The elder son, coming out of the field, hears the music and dancing, and is greatly surprised.

"Calling one of the servants, who was almost too much out of breath to speak a word, he said, 'What is it? What is the matter?'

"'Why, do you not know? Have you not heard that your brother has come back? We are very busy getting up a welcome for him. We have killed the fatted calf, and sent out ever so many invitations. And your father means to make a grand feast.'

"'Humph! in that case I will go in by the back way, and get out

of sight. I don't want to see the beggar; his coming does not make me feel merry. If I am asked for, say I am sick, and gone to my chamber.'

"The man went in, and told the father, who knew at once what the matter was, and came out. He found the elder brother surly and sour, and deaf to all entreaty."

He is highly indignant over the reception of his younger brother, has no sympathy with his father or with the wretched sufferer, but shows the same selfishness which led the prodigal away from home. The father rejoices over the son who was lost and is found, over the one who seems like one raised from the dead; but the brother sulks and grumbles, and finds fault with his father for showing him so much clemency and attention. It was a bad, harsh, unlovely spirit; and such was the condemnation of these proud, self-righteous Pharisees, who blamed Jesus for rejoicing over evident proofs that lost, dead sons of God were coming home to His love and service. How clearly Jesus showed them their own ugly features, which were made more unlovely from the contrast offered by His own humanity and God's grace.

He addresses His disciples on the best use of their earthly possessions, so as to make them yield heavenly riches.

In the parable of The Unjust Steward, He takes an instance of worldly sagacity, or sharpness in the worst sense, to rouse them to worthy exertions in their religious affairs. He discourses about true and false riches, faithfulness in little things, and the necessity of using the world only for God.

The Pharisees were not only opposed to Him, but they spoke derisively, with sneers and mocking words, of His teachings. It

was because they loved money for its own sake, and served God only to gain more wealth or some advantage for themselves. He met them with sharp rebukes for their sins, and taught them that, as they had rejected John and Himself, and violated God's law by their crimes, nothing could persuade them to repent. And He gave them the story of

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

In this picture of extreme wealth and poverty, we are shown a rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day. A voluptuary, or lover of pleasure, lived in a splendid dwelling, and dancing and mirth made the hours pass merrily along. This Dives, which means "rich," had everything that heart could wish of this world's goods. But he was not a man who loved God. He did not worship money, but he was fond of what it would buy for his gratification. He cared not for the ignorance and sin of men, nor for their misery and degradation. He was living only to please his tastes and gratify his propensities, without caring to honor God, or improve the world's condition.

At the door, or gate, of the rich man's mansion, was laid by kind friends a poor man, a beggar named Lazarus, which signifies, "one whose help is God." In his poverty he trusted in the Lord. Helplessly diseased and waiting for death, he sought to hold on to life, by munching the crumbs that fell from the table where the rich man feasted. He desired for himself nothing but the crumbs swept out at the door. The vagrant dogs gathering there on the same errand shared the morsels and aggravated his misery. He was neglected by the prosperous millionnaire, and fed on crumbs, and lay

among the dogs, which also licked his sores, that appeared everywhere through his ragged raiment. Here was the bottom of human misery. Splendor and squalor never looked each other in the face more closely. While the beggar lay there in his pitiable but unpitied destitution, the summons came which separated his spirit from its loathsome tenement.

While the one was dragged out into some lonely place for interment, the other was borne away by angels into Abraham's bosom. How glorious the funeral procession to eyes enlightened by the Spirit of God. When Elijah was translated, Elisha saw the train that carried him aloft, and exclaimed in ecstasy, "The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" How gentle and loving the company who took up the pure soul of Lazarus and sped with it through the air to Paradise, where, according to the then prevailing notion, the "Father of the faithful" presided over the scenes of heavenly bliss. Christ used the common language of the times, to give a vivid and impressive view of the transition from the depths of wretchedness to the heights of blessedness. He gave assurance in the use of such terms of the reality of a condition and place of rest, honor, and enjoyment, which were commonly described by the phrase, "Abraham's bosom."

There was another death. Stalking over the threshold where the beggar lay so lately in his rags and hunger, the grim messenger pressed into the rich man's presence, and said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Lazarus had not much to leave, except the glories of nature; and yet her stormy wind and rain often increased his sufferings. It would be easy for him to die, because he had a hope of heaven. But when death called the man of wealth, and bid

him prepare to go forth into darkness, he looked round in bitterness of spirit on the palatial splendor he must abandon. How much he had to enjoy—how many fountains were flowing for him—what rich tables were spread for him—and what hosts of friends must be left behind! He had only begun to be happy; and now his cup must be dashed to earth unquaffed. All his plans must fail and his hopes perish. The painfulness of such a separation was made more intense by the want of preparation for eternity. He was going forth into a desert, naked, houseless, and alone. What to him was the knowledge that a magnificent burial would be given him? Jesus omits to speak of the burial of Lazarus, but says angels bore him away to Paradise. The rich man, He says, "died and was buried." And we learn, from what immediately followed, that all his wealth could not save his soul. That was "in torments." The same tremendous contrast continues; the parties occupying reversed positions. He who stood at the height of earthly felicity has fallen into the depth of misery, while the wretched beggar has risen out of complete woe into perfect happiness. Jesus, lifting the curtain that shuts out futurity, shows us glimpses of the Unseen World. Both men died. What follows takes place in the invisible life.

All that is said by our Lord here is dramatic, and parabolic. He accommodates Himself to our mental necessities and to the general conceptions then prevalent. But He means to teach truths under forms of language. He gives no sanction to errors. Eternal spiritual realities are presented in symbol. When He employs imagination He uses it to illustrate and impress that which is real. The reality of the soul's rest and unrest is no less solid than that of the bodily comfort and pain of the two characters. One was happy, and

the other unhappy, while in the flesh; when the flesh dropped off, the soul of one was at ease, and of the other disquieted.

Lazarus no longer lies at the door of a palace, but has entered in, and been conducted to the place of rest and honor, the bosom of the Master. No longer a companion of dogs, he reclines as a favorite in the embrace of the holy and glorified ancestor of his people. His food is not the cast-off pieces of human banquets, but the Bread of Heaven. Disease no more ulcerates and agonizes his frame. Perfect health, and cleanness, and beauty have been given him. He is no longer clothed in rags, but is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the rightousness of saints. He has ceased to be dependent on poor selfish men, but is safe at home in his Father's house in Heaven. To those who are poor in worldly goods but rich in faith, this gives consolation and inspires with sublime hopes.

But mark the rich man's changed condition. He was not at home, but in hell. This term was in general use for the under-world —the obscure region where departed spirits dwelt. Of this region, there were two departments—one Paradise, where the holy abodes of the blessed were fixed; and the other Gehenna, where the wicked and lost were tormented. In the latter place the rich man found himself after death. The purple robes and linen garments were exchanged for a raiment of fire. For the wine which cheered his heart, he had the wormwood of remorse and too late sorrow. Instead of feasting on choice viands and generous luxuries, he was hungry with woe and unsatisfied desire. His friends, where are they? And servants—he has none. Looking for some relief, he lifts up his eyes and beholds Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. The beggar's honor and repose must have stung him. He

had always looked down on Lazarus. Now he must look *up* to see him, for they have exchanged places. The last is first, and the first last. "How is the leaf turned after death!"

It is now Dives' turn to beg. "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." As Lazarus desired the crumbs of his feast, so now he prays for a drop of water to cool his burning tongue. He must have been greatly humbled, to have preferred a request so small! His pride had collapsed from its full-blown expansion to the most diminutive proportions. His prayers came too late. He who was wont to speak and be heard, now finds himself without authority or influence. His pride and self-esteem ruined him. He had ignored mercy, and scouted the idea of an invisible future state of retribution, and made merry with his worldly friends, till all was lost, and he was sinking, impoverished and forsaken, into torments. His cry for mercy is vain and fruitless. For the answer came back: "Son," or child, "remember that thou in thy lifetime hadst thy good things, and likewise also Lazarus his evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." A terrible answer to his prayer! The irrevocable past came back on his memory—when he enjoyed life's comforts, and forgot the claims of his brother man in rags and wretchedness at his own door: when he feasted and rioted, and despised eternity: when he lived only a life of animal and temporal pleasure, regardless of that Divine mercy whose streams satisfy him that is athirst for eternal good. He thought he could command even now the kind offices of Lazarus. But he was reminded that a change had occurred, and Almighty justice was rectifying the awards of time. Lazarus is not a servant; he

is not to be exposed to flames to relieve you ; there is an impassable gulf which separates between your world and ours ; and it is "fixed," so that you can obtain no relief; you must linger in the pit, and never escape.

Not to be thus put down, struggling yet with his sentence, Dives prays again. "Then he said: I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house. For I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Probably these men were by this time extremely anxious about the will and the property. He was gone, and they were scrambling to obtain their share of his estate. But he gave this no thought. To keep them from that place of torment, seemed to be his next anxiety. If that state was one where mercy never came, which no ray of hope visited, he would save his brothers from it. There was something, he had found, worse than poverty, and something more desirable than wealth. Such a wish was natural and benevolent. Possibly, however, he feared that his brothers' coming would aggravate his own misery. They would taunt him with evil example, and be companions in endless torment. His prayer might have been thoroughly selfish. It was not for the glory of God. Underneath it lay a subtle insinuation against Divine justice. He would imply that his brothers had no sufficient means of escaping perdition ; while they had the same as himself. If it was not enough to save them, he was excusable for sin, and had a claim on mercy. There was in him no penitence, no submission, no love. He wanted to get out of that horrible place, and this caused him to beg for mercy. He did not wish to be tormented by the reproaches of his five brothers, and prayed for them. He hated God at heart and so

intimated, indirectly, that he had not been adequately warned of his doom as a sinner. Again his plea is denied in these words: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." The answer justifies God's Providence, and shuts another door of hope, and thrusts the lost soul deeper into despair. The Bible is enough. God's word is adequate to save those who are right-minded.

Still pressing his point, he pretends: "If one should go to them from the dead, they will repent." A miracle would cause them to repent. Only let them hear how dreadful are the torments of the lost, and they will repent. Here he acknowledges the need of repentance. Men never savingly repent in view of God's judgments and threatenings. These, when realized in the apprehension, can only create alarm. When, however, one sees that the penalty of sin is great, and thence infers that the guilt is deep, and that God must be holy and hate iniquity, he may also begin to feel guilty, and loathe his depravity and transgression. If then he looks on God's mercy and love, he may cast himself in contrition on the Saviour, and find peace and salvation. A mere miracle, of the kind desired by Dives, would raise in an unbelieving mind a thousand queries, and only harden the heart.

This was the final reply from heaven: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one should rise from the dead." Such an exhibition for their benefit would be useless, and fail to persuade them to become servants of God, if they doubt and deny the Scriptures. Thus closes the scene; and the rich man is shut into his prison-house, from whence there is no escape, and where his sinful kindred will be gathered unless they repent.

Thus Jesus kindles a fire under these Pharisees who despised the

poor. He first shows them God's goodness and love towards wanderers, and His gracious welcome to them when they return; and then He pictures His severity towards those who forget Him and their fellow-creatures.

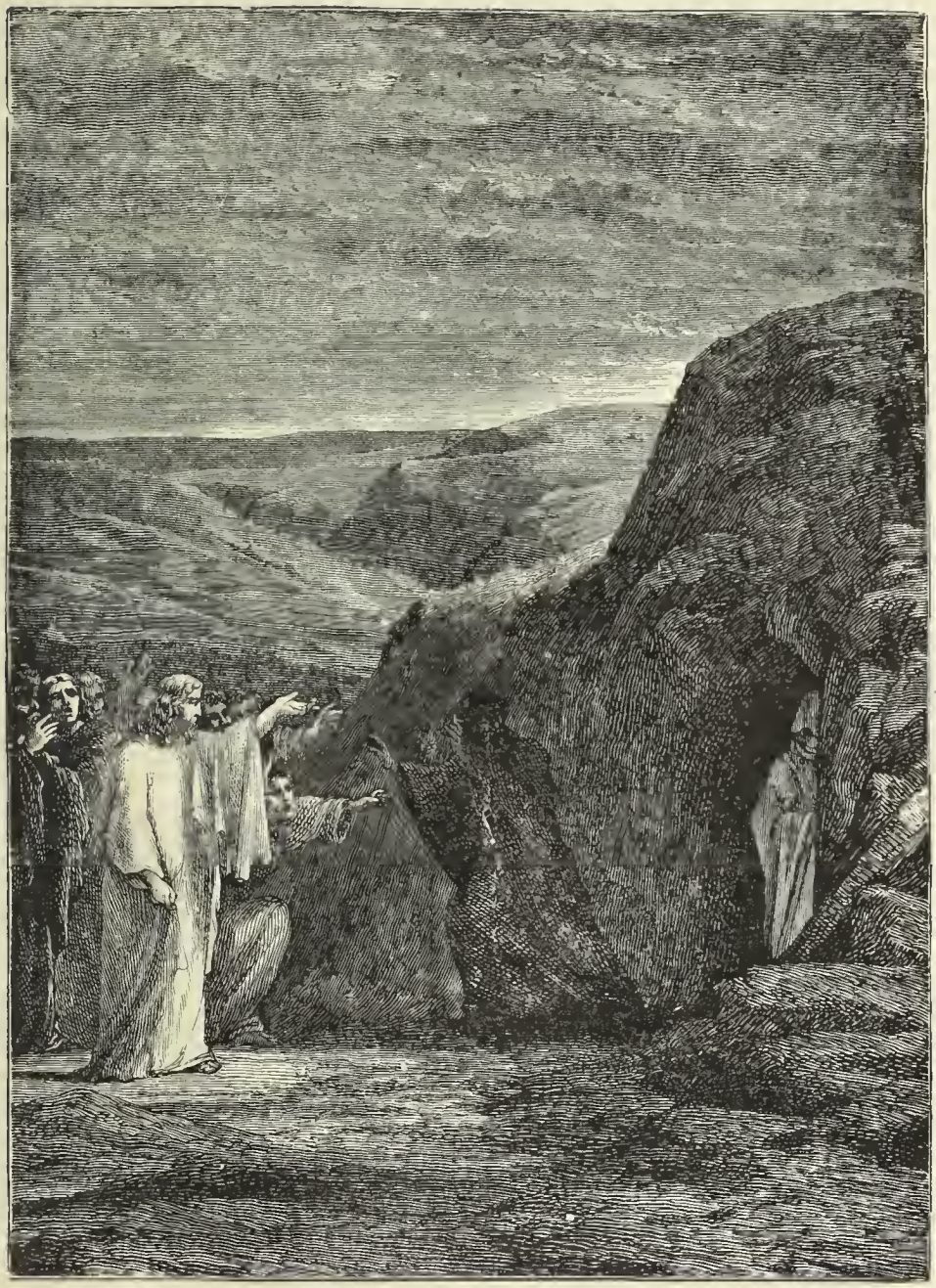
Turning to His disciples, He teaches forbearance, faith, and humility, as He had done before; proposes to go immediately out of Perea into Judea; and so advances again into the thick of dangers.

CHAPTER XXX.

RESCUES LAZARUS AND HIMSELF FROM DEATH.

JESUS WAITING FOR THE CALL OF GOD.—THIS IS TO WALK IN LIGHT.—DISCIPLES BEG HIM NOT TO GO TO JERUSALEM.—WAITS TILL LAZARUS IS DEAD.—WORTHY PURPOSES.—THOMAS VOICES THE MARTYR SPIRIT.—JESUS AND HIS BAND JOURNEY TOWARD JERUSALEM.—THE HOUSES ON THE SAND AND ON THE ROCK.—CHRIST AND HIS TRUTH A ROCK.—FUNERAL RITES AMONG THE JEWS.—MARTHA AND MARY HAVE MANY COMFORTERS.—THEIR BEST FRIEND ARRIVES AT BETHANY.—POETICAL DESCRIPTION OF HIS RECEPTION, AND OF THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.—JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.—MARTHA'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.—JESUS PRAYS AND LAZARUS COMES OUT OF THE GRAVE.—EFFECT OF THE MIRACLE ON THE LEADERS.—THEY HATED JESUS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE LOVED HIM.—CAIAPHAS AND HIS PROPHECY.—IT WAS A REPETITION OF BALAAM'S FOLLY.—JESUS, HUNTED FROM JERUSALEM, ESCAPES TO EPHRAIM.—IN SAMARIA HEALS TEN LEPERS.—ONE ONLY RETURNS TO PRAISE JESUS.—HE IS FURTHER BLESSED.

THE Lord knew that He must suffer and die at Jerusalem. He waited also for the Father to give Him notice of the hour, when He must surrender up Himself to the enemies of the Gospel. When the disciples urged Him not to go into Judea, He told them that He feared not to go where the light of duty lay on the path. He was in God's hands, who would sustain Him to the end. Should He brave dangers, and not be guided by the Father, He would pursue a dark road, and surely stumble. At the call of duty, that He might raise Lazarus



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

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from the grave, and so honor God and prove Himself the Son of God with power, He took His journey to Bethany, which was just over the hill from Jerusalem. He delayed going till Lazarus died and was buried, in order to work a miracle such as would convince all honest minds, and establish the confidence of the disciples.

Thomas the twin, who always looked on the gloomy side of things, said that they would advance to the front and die with Him. They knew the awful enmity felt by the Jews in the city, and realized the mortal peril of their proposed visit. They would not let Him meet it alone, and nobly clung to their Leader. A single day sufficed to bring them to Bethany, since they could travel, at this season of the year, even at mid-day. The sky was mottled with clouds, and the west wind blew softly in their faces. Trees were in their opening leaf, budding vines trailed over the rocks, and wild goats gazed at them from the tops of lofty ledges. A watercourse—dry when they went down, now fed by the night showers—was hurrying to the Dead Sea. By spring it would become a torrent. A house built in that dry ravine, with walls begun on the ground, might be washed away by the rising waters. No matter how strong it was, the eddying current would undermine the soft soil before summer. A building founded on a rock would not be in danger, but would stand every shock. The words of Jesus, and Christ Himself, furnish a solid foundation for the soul and its future well-being. This was about to be made clear and sure, by the labors and events of the closing hour of this day.

The Jews called the first three days after a person died, "days of weeping." The mourners covered their heads in token of grief, and did no work. They neither anointed themselves, nor greeted any

one. Their traditions said that persons had been known to come to life during the first three days; afterwards hope ceased because corruption or decay commenced. The seven days following were called "days of lamentation." According to old customs the mourning lasted a month. Many people collected to express their sympathy and offer comfort to the mourners.

The sisters of Lazarus had given over hoping to see their brother alive, and large numbers were with them from the village and city to weep and lament. This was favorable to the mission of Jesus, as He had many witnesses to His love and power.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.—(WILLIS.)

. . . "Now as Christ
Drew near to Bethany, the Jews went forth
With Martha, mourning Lazarus. But Mary
Sat in the house. She knew the hour was nigh
When He would go again, as He had said,
Unto His Father; and she felt that He,
Who loved her brother Lazarus in Life,
Had chose the hour to bring him home thro' Death
In no unkind forgetfulness. Alone—
She could lift up the bitter prayer to heaven:
'Thy will be done, O God!'—but that dear brother
Hath fill'd the cup and broke the bread for Christ;
And ever, at the morn, when she had knelt
And wash'd those holy feet, came Lazarus
To bind His sandals on, and follow forth
With dropp'd eyes, like an angel, sad and fair,
Intent upon the Master's need alone.
Indissolubly link'd were they! And now
To go to meet Him—Lazarus not there—
And to His greeting, answer 'It is well!'
And, without tears (since grief would trouble Him

Whose soul was always sorrowful), to kneel
And minister alone—her heart gave way!
She cover'd up her face, and turn'd again
To wait within for Jesus. But once more
Came Martha, saying, 'Lo! the Lord is here
And calleth for thee, Mary!' Then arose
The mourner from the ground, whereon she sate
Shrouded in sackcloth; and bound quickly up
The golden locks of her dishevell'd hair,
And o'er her ashy garments drew a veil,
Hiding the eyes she could not trust. And still,
As she made ready to go forth, a calm
As in a dream fell on her.

At a fount
Hard by the sepulchre, without the wall,
Jesus awaited Mary. Seated near
Were the way-worn disciples in the shade;
But of Himself forgetful, Jesus lean'd
Upon His staff, and watched where she should come.
To whose one sorrow—but a sparrow's falling—
The pity that redeem'd a world could bleed!
And as she came, with that uncertain step,—
Eager, yet weak, her hands upon her breast;—
And they who follow'd her all fallen back
To leave her with her sacred grief alone;
The heart of Christ was troubled. She drew near;
And the disciples rose up from the fount,
Moved by her look of woe, and gathered round;
And Mary—for a moment—ere she look'd
Upon the Saviour, stay'd her faltering feet,—
And straightened her veil'd form, and tighter drew
Her clasp upon the folds across her breast;
Then, with a vain strife to control her tears,
She stagger'd to the midst, and at His feet
Fell prostrate, saying, 'Lord! hadst thou been here
My brother had not died!' The Saviour groan'd

In spirit, and stoop'd tenderly, and raised
The mourner from the ground; and in a voice
Broke in its utterance like her own, He said,
'Where have ye laid him?' Then the Jews who came,
Following Mary, answer'd through their tears,
'Lord, come and see!' But lo! the mighty heart
That in Gethsemane sweat drops of blood,
Taking from us the cup that might not pass—
The heart whose breaking cord upon the cross
Made the earth tremble, and the sun afraid
To look upon His agony—the heart
Of a lost world's Redeemer—overflowed,
Touched by a mourner's sorrow! Jesus wept.
Calmed by those pitying tears, and fondly brooding
Upon the thought that Christ so loved her brother,
Stood Mary there; but that lost burden now
Lay on His heart who pitied her; and Christ,
Following slow and groaning in Himself,
Came to the sepulchre. It was a cave,
And a stone lay upon it. Jesus said,
'Take ye away the stone!' Then lifted He
His moisten'd eyes to heaven, and while the Jews
And the disciples bent their heads in awe,
And, trembling, Mary sank upon her knees,
The Son of God pray'd audibly. He ceased,
And for a minute's space there was a hush,
As if the angelic watchers of the world
Had stayed the pulses of all breathing things,
To listen to that prayer. The face of Christ
Shone as He stood, and over Him there came
Command, as 'twere the living face of God,
And with a loud voice He cried, 'Lazarus!
Come forth!' And instantly, bound hand and foot,
And borne by unseen angels from the cave,
He that was dead stood with them. At the word
Of Jesus, the fear-stricken Jews unloosed

The bands from off the foldings of his shroud;
And Mary, with her dark veil thrown aside,
Ran to him swiftly, and cried, 'LAZARUS!
MY BROTHER LAZARUS!' and tore away
The napkin she had bound about his head—
And touched the warm lips with her fearful hand,
And on his neck fell weeping. And while all
Lay on their faces prostrate, Lazarus
Took Mary by the hand, and they knelt down
And worshipped Him who loved them."

In His conversation with Martha, Jesus took this wonderful name: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." He also promised resurrection and endless life to all believers. At first she was not disposed to trust His doctrine of the rising from the dead. But when He challenged her faith she grandly answered: "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." At the grave she lost her faith, when He commanded bystanders to roll the stone away from the mouth of the tomb, because she remembered that he had been dead four days, and was already decayed and offensive. He rallied her faith, as men opened the sepulchre, and she saw the glory of God. Jesus made a prayer at the moment when He was about to call forth the dead man, showing His communion with God. And, in answer to His prayer, many believed, when they saw the dead man walk about alive.

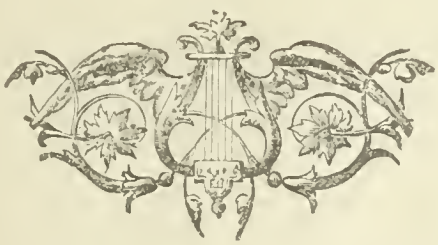
Strange to say, the leaders, hearing of this, were only moved to wrath, and resolved that He must be at once put to death. Why did they act with such folly and wickedness? They were afraid of His popularity. They pretended to fear that the Romans would be angry and destroy the nation, if Jesus was not put down. Caiaphas, a Sadducee, the High Priest, made a speech, and, unconsciously, a

prophecy. The bitterest foe of Jesus was made to say that He should die for that nation, and gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad in all nations and times. God governed his evil tongue, and made his lips utter more than he intended. In this respect he was like Balaam, who tried to curse Israel and could not, but blessed them instead.

Nevertheless, they were allowed to agree that Jesus should die at their hands as soon as possible. He was led by the Spirit again into the wilderness to escape their violence, and was found in Ephraim, a city in the hilly part of Samaria, sixteen miles north-east of Jerusalem. After a stay of a few weeks there, He went through Samaria into the southern part of Galilee. His purpose was to resume and finish the general circuit of Perea, which he was making when He heard of Lazarus' sickness and turned aside to Bethany. In Samaria, he met a community of lepers composed of nine Jews and one Samaritan, whose common misery swallowed up their national differences. These poor creatures had heard of Jesus' miracles, especially in healing lepers, and when they knew of His presence in their vicinity, they determined to ask His help. The opportunity came, and they all cried out, "Jesus, Teacher, have mercy on us!" They did not dare to come very close, because the law forbade it, and their touch was unclean. When He heard their piteous outcry, Jesus turned, and answered them in an indirect manner: "Go show yourselves unto the priests." This was God's law, and they went, each to his synagogue. As they were on their way, the leprosy left them, and their skin was clean and natural. One of them came back, when he discovered the change, shouting glory to God. He also ran up to his Benefactor, and fell on his face before Him, giving Him

thanks. This man was the Samaritan stranger. The Jews did not return, and Jesus was offended, because they gave not God glory, nor allowed Him an opportunity to complete His work as He did in the case of the one, to whom He said: "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

"Ah! thou, who only wouldst be blest,
On thee alone My blessing rest!
Rise, go thy way in peace, possess'd
Forevermore of Me."



CHAPTER XXXI.

THE KINGDOM.

JEWISH EXPECTATIONS OF A KING.—JESUS WAS KING OF THE SOUL.—THE TRUTH A TEST AND SEPARATOR.—SAFETY THROUGH URGENT PRAYER.—PARABLE OF THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.—PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.—GOD'S PRINCIPLE IN FORGIVING AND BLESSING.—LAYS DOWN THE LAW OF DIVORCE.—LOOSE IDEAS REBUKED.—DEATH OR ADULTERY THE ONLY DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE.—GOD DETERMINES WHAT IS TRUE AND RIGHT, WHETHER MEN LIKE HIS DECISOINS OR NOT.—MOTHERS BRING THEIR CHILDREN.—THE APOSTLES KEEP THEM FROM JESUS.—HE REPROVES THE APOSTLES.—THE GOSPEL BELONGS TO CHILDREN.—HE TREATS THEM WITH FATHERLY TENDERNESS.—READS THE DISCIPLES A LESSON OF HUMILITY.—THE CHILDLIKE SPIRIT ESSENTIAL.—POETICAL ACCOUNT OF BLESSING THE CHILDREN.—THE RICH YOUNG RULER KNEELS TO JESUS.—HIS GREAT QUESTION.—HIS MORALITY.—HIS UNHAPPINESS.—JESUS INSTRUCTS HIM TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE.—THIS IS MAN'S CHIEF CONCERN.—THE RICH YOUNG RULER IS ONLY MADE SORROWFUL.—HE PREFERS EARTHLY TO HEAVENLY TREASURE.—THE APOSTLES' COMPENSATION.—THE CHRISTIAN'S REWARD.—TO TRUST, LOVE, AND SERVE CHRIST IS TO BE IN HIS KINGDOM.

THE Jewish nation expected their own king to come with power and splendor, and make them a leading nation in the political world. Jesus was bold enough to offer Himself as that King, and to promise the coming of His Kingdom in due time with suitable demonstrations. This language was intended in another sense than that in which men took it. He meant God's reign in men's hearts and lives. They should belong to the Kingdom, who were obedient and loved

Him. When the Pharisees asked Him when the Kingdom of God would be set up, He told them it was not an outward thing to be heralded by flourish of trumpets and seen of men, but a matter of the heart, something within the soul. He addressed the disciples solemnly, and told them that He must suffer and be cast aside by "this generation"—the people then living. And the same separations would always and everywhere take place, between the good and bad, when He called men to repent and become God's servants, as occurred in the days of Noah and of Lot. Persons engaged in the same business would go in opposite directions. God would choose according to His own wisdom, and exalt one to heaven and leave another to perish.

The disciples must not expect to gain safety except through urgent prayer. To encourage this once more, He speaks the parable of the Importunate Widow. An unjust judge sat in the city gate hearing causes, when a poor widow came to solicit his interference in her behalf against an adversary. He had other business more profitable, and kept putting her off. But she persevered so constantly, that he heard her cause, in order to rid himself of her annoying importunity or teasing. Jesus argued that God, who is good, would certainly hear His own chosen people, even though He seemed to be slow, if they continued in earnest prayer.

He showed them that men who come to God must be humble and feel their need of His blessing, by using the parable of the Pharisee and Publican. Two men went into the Temple to pray. One of them was a publican, a tax-buyer, and belonged to a rough and hated class. The other was a Pharisee, who thought himself better than other men. He went close to the altar in a haughty

manner, and thanked God for his own virtues, and even expressed his sense of superiority over the publican. It was not praying in any real sense, but self-praise before God.

The publican stood far away, as if he felt unworthy to be near God's visible presence, and, with many signs of humility, confessed his sins and prayed for mercy. And God heard his cry, and forgave and blessed him there. The Pharisee went home self-satisfied, but not forgiven. Such, said Jesus, is God's principle, law, or rule, in bestowing answers to prayer. He is again overrun with labors, and beset by enemies. The latter tried to trip Him by a question respecting divorce. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"

Some thought of their wives as toys, or as property to be put aside and disposed of for slight causes. If a man became tired of his wife he might become separated from her; and, in the opinion of many Pharisees, he had a right so to do. This left marriage in a low, loose state, which degraded woman, and endangered the life and happiness of children. Others said that nothing but crime could cut the marriage tie. It must endure till death, unless so dissolved. Jesus did not hesitate to declare this last to be God's purpose and will. He thus gave to wedlock a sacredness which honors the wife and saves the offspring from disgrace and suffering. It is not a matter of convenience to marry and divorce a wife. When once this relation is formed, it comes in place of that between parent and child, and is higher and more binding. Such was God's intention from the beginning; and if Moses said anything about it, he only restrained what he could not wholly prevent, because the people were wicked.

JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

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This even the disciples considered very strict law, which seemed almost to forbid marriage. In His answer, Jesus implied that truth and right were not to be determined by men's wishes or weaknesses. They who were able to receive His doctrine must do so, and obey God and not their own inclinations or human customs.

When He had finished speaking, and was about to proceed on His journey, some children of tender age were brought near Him. The mothers, longing for a blessing on their "infants," besought the disciples to conduct them to their Teacher. But these men were in haste to depart, and thought it useless to have His prayers and strength spent on little children, just to please mothers, and they turned them off with abrupt reproofs. This gave Jesus occasion to show that He was wiser and better than the disciples. For He was much displeased with them, and called up the little ones, and gave the people clearly to understand, that these had as much interest in Him, and His religion, as anybody. As no one could tell when a child might believe and love—how early in life it might be born of God—let the children be brought to Him, and made to know of His grace and mercy. In them there is an unselfishness, sincerity, and trustfulness, which grown-up persons must have if they would be true followers of Jesus. While He was saying this, He took some in His arms, laid His hands on others, and blessed them all. They had no prejudice or enmity against Him, and their confiding approach was in beautiful contrast to the suspicion and bitterness of His enemies, and the oft-recurring doubts and fickleness of the disciples themselves.

CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN.

"'The Master has come over Jordan,'
Said Hannah, the mother, one day;
'Is healing the people who throng Him
With a touch of His finger, they say.

"'And now I shall carry the children,
Little Rachel, and Samuel, and John;
I shall carry the baby Esther,
For the Lord to look upon.'

"The father looked at her kindly,
But he shook his head and smiled:
'Now, who but a doting mother
Would think of a thing so wild?

"'If the children were tortured by demons,
Or dying of fever, 'twere well;
Or had they the taint of the leper,
Like many in Israel."

"'Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan,
I feel such a burden of care;
If I carry it to the Master,
Perhaps I shall leave it there.

"'If He lay His hand on the children,
My heart will be lighter, I know,
For a blessing forever and ever
Will follow them as they go.'

"So over the hills of Judah,
Along by the vine-rows green,
With Esther asleep on her bosom,
And Rachel her brothers between;

"'Mong the people who hung on His teaching,
Or waited His touch and His word,
Through the rows of proud Pharisees listening,
She pressed to the feet of the Lord.

"'Now why shouldst thou hinder the Master,'
Said Peter, 'with children like these?
'Seest not how from morning till evening
He teacheth, and healeth disease?

"Then Christ said, 'Forbid not the children:
Permit them to come unto Me.'
And He took in His arms little Esther,
And Rachel He set on His knee.

"And the heavy heart of the mother
Was lifted all earth-care above,
As He laid His hands on the brothers,
And blessed them with tenderest love.

"And He said of the babe in His bosom,
'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'
And strength for all duty and trial
That hour to her spirit was given."

He had not proceeded far on the way, when they were overtaken by a man who came running, and kneeled at His feet with a question. It was no trifling inquiry. It was worth while to run a long distance, to get a true practical answer. The man did not wish to know about anything less important than how to obtain eternal life. He came to the best source of knowledge, when he knelt to Jesus. He was young, was a ruler, and a rich man These three things ought to make one happy, especially if they are crowned by morality, in any age or part of the world. And yet life is very short, and eternity very long. Dives was in pleasant circumstances till he died, and then

came a dreadful change of situation. "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." The very causes of this young ruler's happiness made him also uneasy. He had time to think, knew his obligation for blessings, was open to impressions from God, and thus felt the need of making preparation for the hour of death. Jesus had moved him deeply, and won his trust, so that he calls Him "Good Teacher." Jesus lifts his thoughts to a goodness higher than that of man, even to God; and tells him to keep the Divine commandments, if he would enter into life.

Ah, said he, I have always done so. Jesus, seeing his sincerity, earnestness, and virtue, loved the kneeling suppliant. And because He loved him, He told him the whole truth. The young ruler said, Though I have obeyed the law, there is something yet lacking, for I am not at peace, have no rest or comfort. He was trying to buy, or earn, or deserve God's eternal favor, and he could not. However good and amiable he seemed to be, there was a law of self-will in his nature that would not suffer God to rule him. He did not know the secret of his want of rest, and hope, for the eternal future. Jesus made it clear by a single sentence, and showed him how to be saved from its fatal power. "Go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me." He must part with his houses and lands, and every kind of wealth, and leave himself penniless; must turn from his office and religious ceremonies; must become a member of a hated band, and follow the despised Nazarene. It was a total upsetting of his plans and modes of life, and commencing anew. It showed how much more valuable, in Jesus' opinion, was eternal life, than all riches, and honors, and goodness were, without the spirit of self-surrender, and of consecra-

tion to Him. Great as the sacrifice would have been on his part, the "treasure in heaven" far outweighs it. "The things which are not seen are eternal."

The young ruler could not bear this; adjudged himself to be unworthy of eternal life, opened his heart to its secret depths, and "went away sorrowful." Jesus had but increased his trouble. He was in love with his great wealth, and preferred it to God's everlasting mercy. He decided in favor of time and its fading good, and against eternity with its glorious riches. Jesus followed his departing figure with a look of regret, and said: How hardly shall they that have riches, and trust in them, enter into the kingdom of God! He declared it to be, humanly speaking, impossible for a rich man to become an heir of heaven. When the disciples, who had supposed that money would buy anything, and that rich men could go where they pleased, asked, "Who then can be saved?" He answered that God could save even the rich. His truth, providence, and grace can turn their hearts to Him, so that they will become poor in spirit, and thus rich towards God, and rich in good works, ready to distribute, and willing to communicate of their abundance to His cause and His poor. Thereupon Peter wished to know what compensation in heaven they should have for leaving all to follow Him. He promised them twelve thrones, and power to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. More than that—every one who suffers with Him shall reign with Him; and if they have experienced losses for His sake, they shall be repaid. They may endure persecutions, but eternal life will overbalance these.

The Saviour kept continually driving out of their minds false ideas of the kingdom, and bringing in true notions of its unworldly, spirit-

ual, and heavenly nature. When the day of Pentecost came, and the Holy Spirit which Jesus promised filled their souls, they saw that character and life were the realities, and all things else were shadows. They were in the kingdom, and enjoyed its honors and blessings, because of their faith in Jesus and fidelity to His teachings. That kingdom receives the believing of all conditions, and when the Lord calls, they are transferred to a higher life in the immediate presence of the King in His beauty.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FINAL ADVANCE TOWARD JERUSALEM.

APOSTLES' WORLDLY AMBITION CHECKED.—PARABLE OF LABORERS IN A VINEYARD.—GOD'S GIFTS IN HIS OWN POWER.—JESUS FILLED WITH MYSTERIOUS SADNESS.—FORETELLS THE THIRD TIME HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH AND RESURRECTION.—DISCIPLES IGNORANT OF HIS MEANING.—NO TRACE OF CHRIST'S FEATURES.—CONJECTURES ABOUT HIS LOOKS.—AN INGENIOUS LETTER ON THE SUBJECT.—JESUS A MAN OF SORROWS.—A MOTHER SOLICITS OFFICES FROM HIM FOR HER SONS.—INDIGNATION AMONG THE APOSTLES.—THE LAW OF HONOR IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS SERVICE.—HIS OWN SELF-SACRIFICE.—JOURNEY TO JERICHO, MARCH 30, A.D. 30.—FIRST VISIT TO JERICHO.—BLIND MAN AT THE GATE.—ZACCHEUS IN A TREE.—BUSINESS AND REPUTATION OF THE PUBLICANS.—THE CHIEF PUBLICAN ENTERTAINS HIM.—JESUS PREACHES AND HE REPENTS.—SAVED BY THE LORD.—OTHERS COMPLAIN AND ARE UNBLESSED.—EFFECT OF JESUS' WORDS ON ALL WHO RECEIVE THEM.—TWO BLIND MEN CURED AS HE LEAVES JERICHO.—VARIETY IN HIS WORKING.—JESUS AGAIN CORRECTS FALSE IDEAS RESPECTING HIS KINGDOM.—PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.—DIVINE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY.—A PRICE SET ON THE SAVIOUR'S HEAD.—WILL HE VENTURE INTO JERUSALEM?—HE ARRIVES AT BETHANY.—HIS PRESENCE RAISES THE EXCITEMENT LIKE STORMY WAVES.—LAZARUS' LIFE IN DANGER.—HE REVEALS NOTHING OF THE OTHER WORLD.—A POINT OF CONTRAST BETWEEN HIM AND JESUS.

IT was natural for the disciples to ask what they should gain, as a fit return for having made sacrifices to attend Jesus in His ministry. To check this spirit from growing to large and evil proportions, the Lord spoke to them in a parable. An owner of a vineyard went early in the morning to the market-place within the city, and found laborers, whom he hired for a penny a day. This coin was a denary, worth

about fifteen cents. The work was pressing, and he went again to hire laborers. He found them standing about, and sent them away to his vineyard with a promise that he would pay them what was right. He repeated this again and again, even employing some at as late an hour as five in the afternoon. When they finished the day, and came to be paid, each man received a denary. Some of the men found fault because those who had worked an hour only, were given the same as those who had begun in the morning. The owner replied that he paid as he agreed, and had a right to use his money as he pleased.

So, Jesus gave them to understand, God's gifts are always according to His promise, but are also of grace. He is Lord of all, and will dispense His favors according to His good pleasure. If any complain about His rewards, they simply disclose their own bad disposition. None can claim anything above or beyond what God gives them.

As Jesus turned His steps directly towards the place where He must die, His manner and countenance were full of sadness.

It was the last week in March. The rains were over. The grain was headed out. Every tree was clothed with beauty, and all nature smiled. But the disciples, when they were alone with the Teacher, felt greatly surprised and alarmed by His demonstrations of sorrow. He told them again the third time of the awful fate that hung over Him. He must now meet the foe, and be destroyed, and rise the third day. Strange as it may seem, the disciples had no right views of His meaning even now, as the time drew near when all must come to pass. The countenance of Christ must have been very expressive, full of soul and power. His eye must have been

keen and sharp. There must have been something noble in His manners, as well as lofty in His thoughts and words. But there is no trace left us, by the men whom God inspired to relate His story, from which we can tell the color of His hair and eyes, the shape of His face and mouth, His height and form, or draw any reliable picture of His personal appearance. No one can paint His portrait, or sculpture His image, and pronounce it like the Original. The men around Him were impressed less by His physical than by His mental and spiritual qualities. Some one ingeniously describes Him in a letter, which purports to have been sent by a Roman living in Judea, to the Senate at Rome. It is as follows:

"There lives at this time in Judea, a man of singular character, whose name is Jesus Christ. The barbarians esteem him as their prophet; but his followers adore him as the immediate offspring of the immortal God. He is endowed with such unparalleled virtue as to call back the dead from their graves and to heal every kind of disease with a word or a touch. His person is tall and elegantly shaped; his aspect, amiable and reverend; his hair flows in those beauteous shades which no united colors can match, falling in graceful curls below his ears, agreeably couching on his shoulders, and parting on the crown of his head; his dress, that of the sect of Nazarites; his forehead is smooth and large; his cheeks without blemish, and of roseate hue; his nose and mouth are formed with exquisite symmetry; his beard is thick and suitable to the hair of his head, reaching a little below his chin, and parting in the middle below; his eyes are clear, bright, and serene.

'He rebukes with mildness, and invokes with the most tender and persuasive language,—his whole address, whether in word or

deed, being elegantly grave, and strictly characteristic of so exalted a being. No man has seen him laugh, but the whole world beholds him weep frequently, and so persuasive are his tears that the whole multitude cannot withhold their tears from joining in sympathy with him. He is moderate, temperate, and wise; in short, whatever the phenomenon may turn out in the end, he seems at present to be a man of excellent beauty and divine perfection, every way surpassing man"

This fanciful sketch is too pleasing to be truthful; for Jesus was too constantly overwhelmed with labors, spent too many nights in prayer, sympathized too deeply with sinners, and felt too keenly His own situation to wear in His features the marks and proofs of luxury and ease. When the prophet said,

"His visage was so marred more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men,"

he referred, not alone to the effects of His last sufferings, but also to that general appearance which belonged to Him as

"A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

As they went up to the capital, and the crisis was drawing nigh, James and John, sons of Zebedee, became anxious to secure a pledge from Jesus that they should be first officers in His kingdom. Their mother, Salome, made the request in their behalf, hoping thus by her added influence to gain great advantages for her sons. Jesus asked them if they could share His sufferings—their bitterness and fulness—and, when they answered Him in the affirmative, He assured them that they should indeed suffer with Him, but their positions must be decided by His Father, who alone had them in keeping.

The other apostles were much displeased at this attempt to get a promise from Jesus, which should fix the superiority of these two in His kingdom. And He prevented a quarrel among them by showing that in His service the only way to lead was to serve. He would have the first position and the highest honor, who should do the most for the good of his brethren. The chief servant would be chief ruler. He clinched this lesson on their minds by referring to His own example of self-sacrifice. He did not come for gain, but loss. He gave up His life to save the many. His beneficent, unselfish life would be crowned by His dying as a ransom for others, for the world of lost sinners.

Over the Jordan, below the mouth of the brook Cherith, a multitude attended Jesus as He proceeded towards Jericho. There was a grove of palm-trees by the river, eight miles long, which flourished because their roots ran down to the water. Jericho was one of the royal cities of Herod, and was enclosed by strong walls. It contained a palace, a hippodrome, and government buildings of much magnificence. Here the tax-collectors had their headquarters for the district. Outside the wall was a reservoir forty rods long and thirty rods wide. The water was brought through a stone aqueduct sustained on arches, from Elisha's Fountain, a mile north. Back of the city hills began to rise, which extended towards the wilderness of Judah.

The date was Thursday, March 30, A.D. 30. It was a memorable day for a blind beggar, who had heard of the cures wrought upon the blind by Jesus of Nazareth. It was the Healer's first visit to Jericho. As the procession went tramping by, the beggar inquired what its occasion was. When he was told, he called aloud to Jesus:

"Son of David, have mercy on me!" But the noise drowned his voice, and Jesus passed on, and left him unblessed. We shall see that the sufferer was not content to let Him go from the city without another effort to gain His attention.

Meanwhile a rich man, anxious to see Jesus, and unable to look over the heads of the crowd, because he was short of stature, ran before the multitude, and climbed into a sycamore tree past which the Saviour must walk.

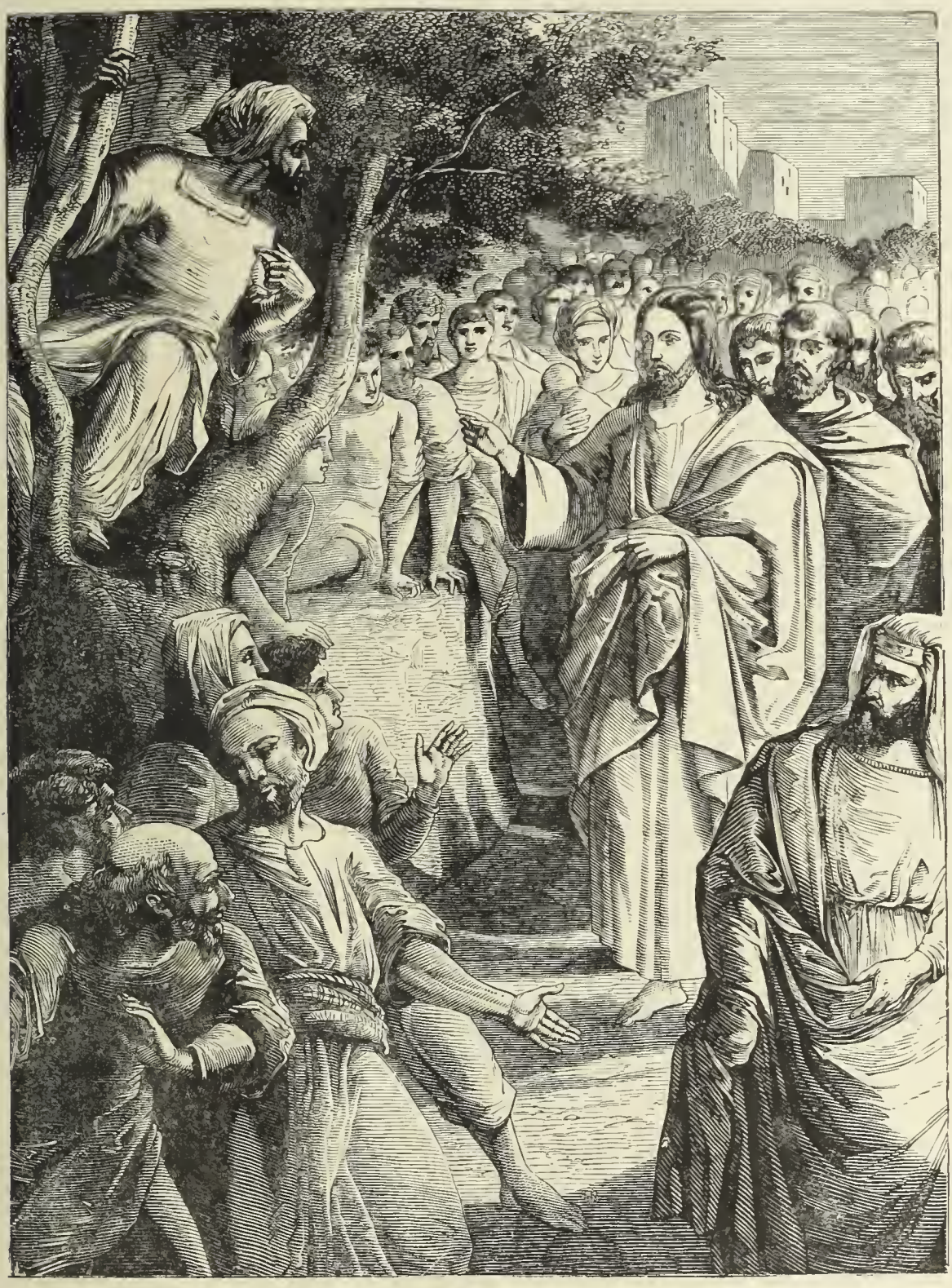
"He was a publican, that is, a man whose business was to collect taxes from the people for the support of the government. Now the men who come round to collect taxes are never very much liked, even when the money raised by the taxes is spent for public schools, hospitals, the paving of streets, the lighting of cities, or any other thing which is useful, good, and necessary. But the money raised by the taxes which these publicans collected was spent to maintain a government which the people detested; to pay soldiers by whom they were insulted and oppressed; to enrich rulers who took away their liberties, deprived them of their rights, and would be glad to destroy their religion. Of course, the men who collected this money were hated by everybody because they did it. They were looked upon as traitors to their country, enemies of their church, foes to their God,—in a word, as little or no better than the heathen themselves. They were hissed and scorned on all hands. It was as much as a man's reputation was worth to walk with one of them in the street, accept their hospitality, or even sit down to the same table with one of them. It was one of the bitterest charges against Jesus, that He dined with publicans.

"But the publicans were no worse than other men. They were

probably as honest, as truthful, as just, as charitable, and as kind, as their neighbors. Their occupation was regarded as a disgraceful one, but they did not like it any better for that; they did not enjoy being pointed at and spit upon. Somebody must do the work, and perhaps they did it more gently and tenderly than it would have been done by other hands. It was better that Jews should collect the taxes from Jews, than that Romans should; for the Romans would do it harshly and cruelly, in a way that might breed quarrel and lead to bloodshed. The publicans did the business, because it was the only business they found to do—more was the pity—or because it was the business they were best fitted to do. They had families to support, and children to feed, and they did it by collecting taxes, as other men did it by catching and selling fish, by breeding sheep for the market, by letting houses to the poor for high rents, or by moulding candles for the Temple service. They did the work, very hard and disagreeable work too, and they took their profit for it,—profit which somebody else would have taken if they did not, and very likely less than somebody else would have taken. What I mean to say is, that these people were not to be despised for their business, were not to be called wicked because other people did not like their trade. Their trade did not hurt them, did not make them impious or hard-hearted. Their trade did not hurt their fellow-beings, as the trade of the dram-seller, for example, does. Those who carried it on might keep their honor and purity, their love to God and man, as clean and whole as any class of persons in the world. Many of them did so; there must have been good in these publicans, or Jesus would not have had so much to do with them. You must have marked this, that He never pours out His wrath on them as He does

on the Pharisees; that He never holds them up to public scorn; that He never says they cannot come into the kingdom of God. On the contrary, it is a standing accusation and reproach against Jesus, that He keeps company with the publicans, dines with them, stays at their houses, admits them into the number of His friends. The truth is, these people were drawn to Jesus; they heard eagerly what He had to say; they welcomed His new Truth; they loved Him; they took pains to meet Him and show Him attention. One of them, who was sitting at his office door as Jesus passed by, rose instantly at His call and became His disciple. This was Matthew, the writer of the Gospel which bears his name. And it is a publican whom Jesus sees at his prayers, and praises for his humility."

The Saviour had become known as a friend of publicans, and this man Zaccheus takes pains to have a good view of Him. It was evident that he felt considerable earnestness about it, for he was receiver-general of taxes for all that region, and a man of some importance, and it was almost a laughable thing for such a man to climb a tree to overlook the crowd. But he was abundantly rewarded for his pains. As Jesus passed under the Egyptian fig-tree, He looked up, and there saw a fruit ripe for plucking. He stopped, and asked Zaccheus to make haste and come down, for He wished to dine with him. The little man slipped quickly to the ground, and led the way to his house, where Jesus was hospitably entertained. During the hours of the afternoon many thronged the court, and Jesus addressed them as He was accustomed to do, upon the things that pertained to their salvation. Nor had He any hearer more sincere and interested than the chief publican. His house and heart were opened wide to receive the Lord. And the consequence was,



JESUS CALLING ZACCHEUS.

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that the little man stood up before Christ and confessed his sins, and pledged to give his property largely to the poor and to those whom he had wronged. He was far nobler than the rich young ruler; and Jesus pronounced him saved, because he had faith. In receiving Jesus, he obtained salvation. As he believed, he was a son of Abraham, "who believed God," and was the father of the faithful. And Jesus saw His own delightful mission fulfilled, for He had come to seek and to save that which was lost.

There were men who felt offended and said so, when the Lord went home with Zaccheus. They were not in a condition of mind to be benefited by His society and teaching. They were playing the elder brother's part in the parable of the Prodigal Son. And He with prophetic eye foresaw what would come from His intercourse with the publican, and His tender heart led His choice. He saved a soul; and from that act how many were blessed by the consecration of Zaccheus and his money! Wherever Jesus truly makes a believing heart whole, wherever He redeems a soul, He also opens a fountain of sweet waters, even as Elisha turned Jericho's bitter stream sweet at its source.

The next morning the party set out again on their journey, and multitudes went with them out of the city towards Jerusalem. The blind man joined the other at the opposite gate of the city, and together they waited for the Lord to pass out. When the favorable moment appeared, Bartimeus raised a tremendous shout, which caused Him to halt, and command them to be brought near. This made them leap for gladness, and with eager haste casting aside their cloaks, that no hindrance might cause delay and lose them the blessing, they came close, and told Him just what they wished Him to do for them:

"Open our eyes that we may receive sight." The compassion of Jesus moved His hands; and, as He touched their eyelids, they felt a Divine relief. The party moved on; and these men followed, needing no one to lead them, and demonstrating the miracle so plainly, that all the people gave praise to God.

The blind beggar at Jerusalem was healed without either knowing his Healer or asking His interference. Jesus did it for the glory of God, and afterwards saved the sinner's soul. Bartimeus called Him Son of David, and made great exertion to procure His favor. Thus Jesus worked like His Father, who is Sovereign Lord of all, and executes all things after the counsel of His own will.

As they passed on amidst wild excitement, and drew near the capital, some supposed that Christ would set up a visible throne, and by His power sweep away all opposition, and rule in glory as King of the Jews. This was utterly false; and He again tries to correct the opinion, and to impress the people with the need of diligence in His service, and with the danger of opposition to Him. A prince leaves his province to go to the capital that he may receive from the king a right to rule. He calls together ten of his servants or officers, and gives them each a small sum of money to trade upon while he is absent. They have about fifteen dollars apiece. After he leaves the country, his subjects send word to the king that they will not have him for their ruler. Nevertheless he is confirmed in office, and returns. The servants appear, and are rewarded in a princely manner according to their respective diligence and success. One of them finally enters his presence with a complaining story, and insults the prince, and lays down the money which had not been used. The lazy fellow is taken at his word, and deprived not only of all reward,

but also of his "pound," which was given to the man who had so employed his principal that he had ten pounds and ten cities. Thus He taught the disciples the necessity of activity in the use of their knowledge and power, their means and opportunities. By energy and faithfulness they would enlarge their possessions, and God would liberally bless them. The slothful doubter would lose everything. His enemies, the prince in his wrath ordered slain. And thus shall perish the foes of God and of Christ—not in dying, but in eternal banishment from God and heaven.

It was well known that a price had been placed on the Saviour's head by the leaders at Jerusalem. And among the crowds who came up at this Passover to the Temple, the question was freely discussed, whether He would venture among these fierce and powerful antagonists. There was a command issued by the Sanhedrim, that if any man knew where He was, he should inform them, that they might arrest and take Him prisoner.

The Son of God again reposes under the friendly roof of Lazarus of Bethany, whom He raised from the dead. This miracle produced tremendous commotion in that region, and thousands visited Lazarus out of curiosity. When it was known that Jesus was there, the excitement rolled like waves around that humble village. The people were persuaded that Jesus was Son of God, Messiah and Saviour, and they expressed their belief, in spite of the rulers. This state of things enraged them so much that they consulted about murdering Lazarus first—as if he was to be blamed for having been raised from the dead! They were wicked and desperate, and vainly hoped to destroy truth by putting to death its defenders and witnesses.

It is a curious circumstance that we know nothing more of Laza-

rus; and that nothing appears to have been told by him about that "awful other world" from which he was recalled. He lived and died like other men; while Jesus, according to His repeated prophecy, after being buried, rose, and, without again dying, ascended to the right hand of God.

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